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Christian life

ECHOES

FROM

THE LIVING GRAVE.

BY A CONVICT

IN

SING-SING PRISON.

WITH

A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND A NUMBER OF LETTERS FROM CONVICTS, ETC.

"JESUS said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." LUKE 5: 31, 32.

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TO

ALL PRISONERS

THIS

VOLUME IS DEDICATED

WITH THE PRAYER,

THAT

IT MAY PROVE A BEACON TO GUIDE THEM OUT OF THE MIDNIGHT DARKNESS

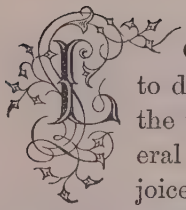
OF

SIN AND UNBELIEF

INTO

THE GLORIOUS LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

PREFACE.



ORD, what wilt thou have me to do?" has been the language of the writer of these pages for several years past. He is greatly rejoiced that although he is shut out from the world, the good Lord gave him something to do.

On perusing these pages the reader will find that the glory of God's holy name and the salvation of sinners are the only object of the writer.

He claims no literary merit, but as a soldier of the cross he means to wave its glorious banner as high as possible.

The "Solitary Thoughts, Views, and Experience," and "Letters" were penned in his lonely cell, during a period of several years,

merely for private reference. The different "Statements of Conversion" were given by the brethren themselves, and were addressed partly to the chaplain and partly to the writer.

It was not his intention to publish a sketch of his life, but his friends desired to know something about

THE AUTHOR.

Sing-Sing, October, 1868.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE reader may be interested to know something of the history of this little book—under what circumstances it comes before the public, the author still being in prison. The following extract from a letter of the author will in part explain:

"Please permit me to give you a brief history of the 'Echoes from the Living Grave,' in which you seem so greatly interested, and for which I am truly thankful.

"When I first became acquainted with the Lord Jesus, November 6, 1862, I often, when in my cell alone, penciled such thoughts as occurred to my mind, for the sole purpose of beholding the state of my mind in its earliest love, and to ascertain from time to time whether I am progressing in the divine life or not. It was not my desire that any one else should ever lay an eye upon them. One day last summer, however, Brother N—— entered the

office, and found me perusing some pages, and desired to know the contents of them, and carried them off, and on returning them urged their publication. I laughed at this idea; but he insisted upon my continuing in the same strain, and preparing the manuscript for the press. Finally, I concluded that the good Lord and his people might be pleased to bless and accept the efforts of an humble and penitent sinner. In compliance with the request of those of my brethren who favored me with their experience, I wrote the Autobiography, copied Solitary Thoughts and Letters, wrote a number of articles, and copied the statements from the brethren.

"Mr. S—— kindly informed me that some of your friends thought there were some borrowed passages in the manuscript. It is possible that the charge against me is a righteous one, but I am unconscious of any such transgression. I do not remember of having copied from other writers, except from the Bible and history. But as the thoughts were written years ago, and as my memory is imperfect, it is likely that I am in the wrong.

Be it as it may, the thoughts expressed were the feelings of my soul when written. The quotations from history were intended to serve as illustrations, as for instance Alexander the Great, and Diogenes. But if you, or your kind friends, find any thing in it which might prove a stumbling-block, please reject it, that not evil but good may be produced by it.

"It is said that there is nothing new under the sun. The words and thoughts there were written thousands of times by holy men and women before the present age; but I believe have never been expressed by a convict, an outcast, an unworthy worm, and consequently it is something new. It is the production of God's Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of one who loves his Saviour with every faculty of his soul which is burning for his glory, in spite of the most adverse circumstances by which he is surrounded. The angels in heaven smile upon it, and, I hope and trust, His people will not condemn it. It was written to induce Christians to praise God that some good things may be found

even in prisons. It was written for the benefit of the young and inexperienced—the weak in faith, but especially for the fallen. It will fulfil its mission if published. It will prove a blessing to many a prodigal, and gladden the heart of many a sorrowing child, to the glory of God. Doubtless it has many defects; but when you consider that I never received one hour's instruction in the English language, you will conclude with me that the Lord Jesus had a hand in it."

In another letter he writes in reply to my proposal to take the manuscript to the Tract Society:

"The idea of presenting the 'Echoes' to the Tract Society for publication is exceedingly pleasing to me. I would ever be grateful if you could make the necessary arrangements. I love that heroic army. Through the instrumentality of their 'Don't put it off,' I was led to reflect on my present and future state. If they publish it, it will find its way into every library in the land, and prisoners will get their portion.

"The book is yours. I only desire a copy

in print of it. If this cannot be, then I would like to retain the original. It is dear to me. I have prayed and wept over it."

I have accepted it in trust. The Tract Society do not issue the book. They kindly have it printed at their office, which was all I desired. It is published by subscription, and will be sent gratis into every prison throughout the length and breadth of our land, provided sufficient funds can be raised for the purpose; that all whom the author especially hopes and prays may be benefited by it, may have the opportunity to read it, and learn what the gospel can do for their benighted souls.

Realizing how much it has done for himself, is it strange that he should desire the same for others? Willing to lay bare the secrets of his inmost soul, showing how great was his depravity, how deeply dyed in tresspasses and sin, how hard is the way of the transgressor; and willing to be known as an outcast from the pale of society, a felon in a state-prison, with nothing of this world's goods, with no prospect before him but in the humblest walks of life should he live to

be released, would this be the way to glorify himself? I think not. When we come in his history to his regeneration, to God he gives all the glory, disclaiming any merit of his own. Feeling as a little child who has grievously offended his parent but is now reconciled, the loving heart is overflowing with gratitude towards God and man for the mercy vouchsafed to him.

This book speaks of God's holiest mysteries; the influence of the Holy Spirit to awaken, to convince, and to convert the sinful soul and bring it into harmony with the All-perfect. The angels in heaven have rejoiced over these repentant ones, and let no man dare speak lightly of them. A voice speaks through these pages, heed it, and "don't put it off." The same voice which stilled the raging waves of Gennesaret, stills the rough waves of the troubled soul, and can bring peace and contentment even in a prison. That peace and contentment are worth your seeking, "Seek, and ye shall find."

The chaplain* of the prison, writes: "The

* Rev. J. B. Smith.

place where the thoughts contained in this little work originated, and where these experiences were realized, has been familiar to me in the labors of the past three years, and the greater part of what is herein contained in relation to the prison and its inmates has passed under my immediate observation. We have here presented earnest and honest expressions of what has been known and felt of the grace of God abounding to the chief of sinners even in prison.

"Stone walls and iron doors furnish no barrier to this grace. Men and women are here shut out from the pale of society, but not from the mercy of Him who hears the groanings of the prisoner and looses those who are appointed unto death.

"There have been witnessed enough of the displays of divine grace to satisfy me that the jail of Philippi is not the only prison where that grace has been displayed. Like Paul and Silas, the prisoners of Sing-Sing prison have prayed and sung praises, and the Lord heard them.

"Every Sunday morning from 1,200 to 1,400

prisoners assemble in the prison chapel, where service is held: singing, prayer, reading the Scriptures, and a sermon preached; and no more attentive and appreciative audience need be sought for in any of the Christian churches than this, comprising men of every nationality, convicted of almost every known crime. Among them are Protestants, Catholics, Infidels, Gentiles and Jews, paying an outward respect to the worship; in each of which classes the gospel has been the power of God unto salvation to them that believe. To many of them 'the story of the cross' is comparatively, if not entirely, new. Few of them have frequented the sanctuary, and the notes of the gospel have not become dull sounds to their ears. They have gone farther down in the steps of vice, and plunged deeper into crime, as a class, than others; but when they are shut up to their own reflections, and find that for all their risks and anxieties, all they have to show is their prison-stripes and a commission to hard labor without wages for a term of years, many of them are in a frame of mind to be directed

to something which is more substantial and which fades not away; and just here the notes of the gospel come in to awaken the slumbering conscience, to arouse from sin and guilt, and the very newness of the gospel story gives it additional efficacy and power.

"Prayer-meetings are another power for good in the prison. Prayers here are as devout and earnest as ascend anywhere from Christian temples. Confession of sin seems heartfelt and sincere, and words of genuine Christian experience indicate that the hearts of many have been wrought upon by the truth, and regenerated by the power of God. The heavens have often seemed to bow very low to that group of willing worshipers within prison walls, as their prayers have climbed from the lowest depths of the inner prison to the throne of God.

"To the inquirer seeking the way of life, these meetings have been a bright and shining way, where they have spent the best hours of their life. They have been garden-spots in this otherwise desert, where the wilderness and desolate place has blossomed as

the rose. They have been in this 'valley of Achor' as a 'door of hope' leading out into a large and wealthy place, the place on earth which some have found nearest heaven. If the walls of the prison have not been shaken and the doors thrown open, the walls of infidelity have crumbled down and stony hearts have been broken, witnessing again that the prayer-meeting which was held by Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi was not the only effectual prayer-meeting ever held in prison.

"The personal incidents and experiences narrated are some of the clusters of the vine which creeps along under the shadow of prison walls, many more of which might be brought: sufficient, however, are given to satisfy any one who carefully considers them, that there are no places so desolate but the vine of the Lord's planting may flourish there.

"It is not claimed that the cases noted are all of them genuine conversions, though of the most of them there is no more than ordinary reason to doubt; nor that the most judicious selections have always been made. The au-

thor and compiler has exercised his own judgment in a comparatively narrow range of observation, it being generally known that the freedom of intercourse is not very extended among prisoners within the walls of a prison. It is safe to say that the cases selected bear an honest record as far as human judgment can discern, though it would be nothing surprising if the future of some of them should show that they had misapplied the grace of God, and as a consequence, had failed of being established in the regeneration, or being begotten into newness of life in Christ Jesus.

"This is a first effort in conveying thoughts to others through such a channel, and is not to be judged by its literary finish, but rather as the outgoings of a soul overflowing with the sentiments expressed, and prompted by a desire to glorify God, in making his own experience and that of others in like condition with himself, a means of salvation, especially to those who, like them, are shut up in prison. There will be found, however, a freshness of thought and originality of expression which, in connection with the circumstances under

which the book was written and the condition and character of the person by whom it was written, will doubtless give an interest in it to very many. My earnest prayer is that it may prove what the preaching of the gospel was designed to be, deliverance to the captive and opening the prison to them that are bound.

"The writer of these pages makes no pretensions to being an accomplished writer or scholar. Had he ever been either, seven years of prison service is not calculated to enhance literary culture; and being or becoming a good mechanic is no guarantee against grammatical inaccuracies, either of construction or language."

The first intention was to have the book published precisely as it was written, but by advice it is revised, only to make verbal corrections where the author has misused a word, (which even an educated foreigner might do,) and to abridge where there has been a redundancy. The construction of the sentences, the arrangement, etc., are all his own. Not even his friend who recommended its publication, nor the chaplain has read the whole

of it—it comes to me fresh from his hand, dictated, as he says, by the Holy Spirit.

A work "begun, continued, and ended in prayer," may be useful not only to those hapless ones within the walls of a prison, but to those whose foot has never touched a prison floor. It may be the means of guiding many a footstep within those drear walls, where words can be spoken to grateful hearers, that will tell in time and in eternity. There are hearts within those walls craving Christian love and sympathy, and shall we stand aloof from any place where our blessed Master commands us to go, fearing that we may be soiled by contact with the erring? We go to impart light, not to receive darkness; and if we go in faith and prayer, we shall not come out less pure, but shall go forth with blessings from grateful hearts that will not forget the small sacrifice we make.

"Lord, lead the way the Saviour went,
By lane and cell obscure;
And let our treasures still be spent,
Like his, among the poor.

"Like him, through scenes of deep distress,
Who bore the world's sad weight;
We, in their gloomy loneliness,
Would seek the desolate."

I willingly stand sponsor for this little waif that in God's providence has fallen into my hands; nothing fearing, nothing doubting—*only asking*, Come, and work in the field where "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." We ask no earthly recompense or approval, but if hereafter we hear these words addressed to us, shall we not be ten thousandfold repaid?

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." MATT. 25:34, 35, 36.

* * *

NEW YORK, January, 1869.

"Think gently of the erring one,
Oh, let us not forget,
However darkly stained by sin,
He is our brother yet.

"Heir of the same inheritance,
Child of the self-same God;
He hath but stumbled in the path
We have in weakness trod.

"Speak gently to the erring ones,
We yet may lead them back,
With holy words and tones of love,
From misery's thorny track.

"Forget not, brother, thou hast sinned,
And sinful yet mayst be;
Deal gently with the erring heart,
As God hath dealt by thee."

ECHOES

FROM

THE LIVING GRAVE.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I WAS born December 1, 1831, in O——, Canton Z——, Switzerland, the youngest son of Jacob and Barbarie M——. My father was a turner by trade, and was esteemed for his honesty and industry. He managed to support his family of five children, and procure a moderate education for them. According to the laws of the country, when six years old I was sent to school, and soon be-

came a favorite of my teacher. The prayers of a godly mother and an affectionate father accompanied me, and my days were pleasant. But my blooming career was not to last long. The angel of death broke into my father's dwelling, and carried off the light and hope of the house. Before I saw eight summers our guardian angel, an amiable and affectionate mother, had gone to another land, never more to return. The sorrow and anguish of my heart can only be imagined by those who have been similarly afflicted. Before this wound was healed, the messenger of death knocked at the same door again, and at the age of nine years I was an orphan. Our home was broken up. Henry, the eldest, enlisted under the banner of the king of Naples. Barbarie, the second, intended to go as housekeeper. John, the third, was to be sent as apprentice to a tailor. The youngest, Magdaline, was to be sent to her godfather's, and I was to go to a rich uncle at some distance from home.

The day for breaking up the family circle, the dearest ties, arrived but too soon. A

pious aunt was present, seeking to soothe the broken hearts of her deceased brother's children. She took each one by the hand, spoke to them most affectionately of the one thing needful, and bore them in prayer to him who promised to be a Father to the fatherless. It was a most impressive and solemn scene to every one, and for the last time I bade the loved ones good-night. At an early hour, July 28, 1842, the family was assembled for the last time. Prayer was offered; after which Aunt Elizabeth again endeavored to lead us to Him "who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." At seven o'clock we parted, sobbing and weeping, some of us never again to meet, except perhaps in that land where parting is no more. Sister Barbarie consented to see the two youngest taken care of. The scene which now ensued—at the final bidding farewell to our dear home, to all those sweet places of childhood—I cannot describe. My heart was broken. Sad and weary, we started for our new destiny. After four hours' walk we arrived at Uncle W——'s, but found the house closed. It was harvest-time, and

all hands were engaged in the field; so we went to Godfather W——'s, who was at his post, teaching school. He received us very kindly, and with a father's affection sought to disperse our sorrow. Magdaline was received as a member of the family. In the evening we returned to Uncle W——'s, and were admitted by an elderly lady, who, after setting wine and bread before us, with the request to help ourselves, disappeared to prepare supper for a number of day-laborers, who, an hour later, gathered around a long and well-laden table. An hour later I was dreaming sweet dreams of our former home, and my sorrowful heart enjoyed an hour's rest. Early the next morning I was aroused, and descending the stairs I found my sister getting ready to leave, so as to enter on her engagement. Another parting scene, a last "God bless you!" and I was left alone. Never shall I forget that moment of anguish and agony, separated from my last friend, from all my former ties, from all those I so dearly loved. I found myself a stranger in a strange house. Only he can sympathize with me who has

been through the same bitter ordeal, who has had the same history to relate.

Thrown altogether into new surroundings, I was hardly able to form an idea of my present condition, not even knowing my relations.

It was a busy time, all hands were engaged outdoors; so I went and assisted in harvesting. All was new to me. I heard many rough and profane words uttered. Finally, Sunday arrived, and I saw my uncle and his family for the first time gathered at the breakfast-table. It consisted of four persons. At the head of the table sat a man of about forty-five years of age, with a hardened and somewhat repulsive countenance. He was my uncle. Every other word he spoke was a profane one, and terrible it was for me to listen to his fearful oaths. My aunt, who had so far ministered to my wants, was of the same nature, and proved to be very fond of strong drink, especially of pure white grape brandy, in which she, whenever there was an opportunity, so freely indulged, that she really became intoxicated. Besides, she used snuff very extensively. Another person was a

brother of my uncle, of the same type and mould, yet even more fierce and repulsive in his manners and actions. The last at the table was my cousin John, uncle and aunt's only son. He was altogether different in his ways and manner from the old people. He was about twenty years of age, very kind and gentle. No servants were kept. The work was done by themselves and day-laborers, who were of the same stamp—profane men.

Surrounded by such a world, I soon became acquainted with bad boys, and ere long I was the ringleader of a band of young ruffians, who delighted in tormenting man and beast and doing all the mischief they possibly could. Let me give you but one specimen of it.

It was on a fine Sunday afternoon in January, 1846, that I invited a number of young girls to what is there called a sleighing party. They all consented, and we went out to a neighboring hill, where I procured a sleigh without leave from a farmer's barn. It was large enough to accommodate all. I pulled it up the hill, and the girls followed. Arriving at the top, they mounted the sleigh, while I

took my place at the helm, started it, and down we went at full speed, arriving safely at the bottom. This they considered great sport, and meant to enjoy it all the afternoon. I repeated my trips half a dozen times, and all went off well. But now I concluded to have a little fun of my own. At the bottom of the hill, close to the road, was a small pond, and I concluded to give them a slight dipping. Before starting the next time I gave them good encouragement, and induced them to sing a song; and so we started in good spirits. I kept on the side of the pond, and on our arrival there gave the sleigh a jerk, and jumping beside it, my precious load went into the water. I was so greatly delighted that I sat down in the snow to have an easy and perfect view of these unfortunate creatures crawling out of the water. Some of them submitted to their lot quietly, while others upbraided me for my mischief, who in their turn were treated with snowballs, following them up to the doors of their dwellings. The six years I remained at my uncle's were filled with such adventures that I became the terror of every household.

About the 1st of April, 1848, I concluded to try my fortune elsewhere. When making my intention known to my uncle, he would not even answer me, and in vain did I look for a parting present, having served him faithfully for so many years for nothing more than my necessary clothing. I packed up my few things, and bade them adieu. I obtained a situation on a farm about eleven miles from Uncle W——'s, at ten dollars a year. But soon I found that my acquired manners and habits did not give satisfaction, and ere long I was quarrelling with my employer and his wife. I left them after two months. While walking on some two miles I was fortunate enough to meet a farmer who wanted help. He was an elderly gentleman, and his wife proved a mother to me, and I felt more at home than at my uncle W——'s. After serving with satisfaction about three months, my brother John, whom I had not seen since that sorrowful morning when the family was dispersed, visited me unexpectedly, and told me that he was determined to emigrate to America, and insisted upon my accompanying

him. I was well pleased with this proposition, for America was always presented to me as the land where milk and honey flow. "But how is it about means?" I inquired. "Oh," said he, "I will apply to some of our wealthy relatives; they will and must advance us the necessary sum." He went to work, but with little success. He became discouraged, when suddenly a well-dressed stranger called at Uncle W——'s for information of the two youngest sons of the late Jacob M——. On hearing this, brother John immediately made his way to uncle's place, and found the stranger, who proved to be an intimate friend of Uncle M—— of Baltimore, Maryland, America. We were well pleased to learn that this messenger was commissioned by Uncle M—— in Baltimore, to induce us, if possible, to emigrate. We were ready. Our friend offered to pay expenses, which uncle could repay on our arrival there. On leaving my employer, he, after paying my wages, kindly presented me with a few heavy silver pieces.

On the 10th of September, 1848, we, in company of our friend and six more young

comrades, with hearts full of joy and hope, and great expectations, bade farewell to the Swiss Alps. We arrived in Havre on the 17th, and sailed on the 1st of October in the French ship Argo for New York. Before even land disappeared I was taken sea-sick—a disease not very pleasant to a mountain boy. This complaint increased as we advanced upon the waves, and I more than once would fain have exchanged my condition, even if to return to my uncle's house. About the fourth day my stomach seemed exhausted, and was apparently ready to receive nourishment, and in a few days I was restored. My comrades, who were likewise overtaken by this sea monster, were also improving, and we had a good time. On the night of the 22d, after a severe storm of three days and nights, and near our journey's end, the vessel received a very heavy blow. The passengers generally—three hundred and fifty in number—were greatly frightened; judgment-day seemed to be at hand. Some were thrown out of their beds; some cried to St. Mary and other saints, some to Jesus, and others to God.

On examination it was found that a schooner had run against us, making a hole of about six by ten feet just above water. If the storm had lasted but one hour longer, our condition would have been hopeless. The schooner, it was said, was dashed to pieces, and its crew and cargo lost.

November 1st we were in New York. The following day Brother John and myself parted from our friends, and arrived at our uncle's residence in Baltimore, Md., on the 3d.

Here we met with kind and sympathizing hearts; and for once in my life I felt comfortable and almost at home, and resolved to stay for a time; while Brother John followed his occupation as a tailor. The family consisted of three members, father, mother, and son. Cousin Henry was almost as wild as myself. We soon got to fighting, and uncle concluded to separate us. He advised me to learn a trade, and proposed that of shoemaking. After some reluctance I consented, and was installed as an apprentice of this worthy craft. This trade, however, did not suit me, and after a few months' stay I left my boss,

without notifying him or my uncle. I then went to a confectioner; but my wages in this branch ($2 50 per month) were not sufficient for the wants of a youngster of eighteen years, and I left him after three months' service. From there I went to another confectioner, where I received $3 per month, served him two months, and bade him farewell, telling him that the business did not agree with my health. This time I took a fancy to cabinet-making; applied at a large furniture manufactory on Gay-street, and was accepted.

The first four months passed off well. My task was to ride out with the driver, delivering furniture and other goods; but when put to the bench to work, I desired a change, which was procured by playing off sick. As expected, my employer asked me if I could n't work in the finishing rooms, learning the branches of varnishing and upholstering. This was my heart's desire, and I readily consented. In these branches I progressed rapidly, was looked upon as a good boy, and my wages were soon raised to $4 per week. Things went on exceedingly well for some six

months, when one day my boss entered the varnish room somewhat intoxicated, and found fault with my work. Knowing him to be in the wrong, I protested, and was knocked down. Without saying another word, I took my cap and jacket and left. The next day I obtained employment as journeyman finisher at another establishment at a dollar per day. A few days after, my old boss met me, and said he was very sorry for what he had done to me, and desired me to return. I yielded and returned; but things would not work right now. I had been a journeyman, and could no longer be used as a boy. I applied for higher wages, but failed.

Ten hours I spent industriously in the workshop; ten more were consumed in eating and sleeping. But what was I to do with the remaining four hours? This was a question hard to solve, for the theatre, saloons, beer-shops, and other vicious places were inviting me all around—temptations which no young man unregenerated can withstand. In the mean time Brother John became sick, and was advised by his physician to remove to a

warmer climate. He at once decided to make Savannah, Ga., his home. According to previous arrangement he called on my employer, and told him that I was now of age, and desired an honorable discharge, which was refused. This, however, did not hinder us in our undertaking; and in a few days more we sailed for the sunny South. The company, not including crew, captain, his wife, and child, consisted of four male passengers, three of whom expected much from a change of air. The voyage, which lasted ten days, was very pleasant to all. After arriving at our destination, and securing comfortable quarters, we sought and found employment; and for the first time I earned mechanics' wages, $20 per week.

One evening, while sitting alone in the barroom, reading a paper and consuming a cigar, a person on the opposite side of the room, whose eyes had been upon me for some time, arrested my attention. His head was covered with an old, torn Kossuth hat, the brim nearly resting on his copper nose. His eyes reminded me of those of Uncle W——, fiery. His

features were the features of a drunkard. His body was covered with some filthy rags. His home seemed to be the dram-shop, street, and gutter. After a while he arose, and with faltering steps approached me. I expected a fight, and mustered up my courage, but still assumed a friendly attitude. He drew near, and in a very pleasant way said:

"My young friend, wont you take something with me?"

"No, I thank you. I never drink except when thirsty, and have just had my tea," was my answer.

"Never drink!" exclaimed he, somewhat astonished.

"No," I repeated, "I never drink except when I am thirsty, and then it is lemonade or soda water. I don't appreciate the life in which you seem to glory;" in the mean time perusing my paper, paying little attention to him. Silence prevailed for a minute. At last our eyes met, mine betraying indifference, while his were filled with precious pearls.

"Young man," said he, as tears ran down his cheeks—he was a man of about forty-five

years—"young man, will you permit me to be your friend?"

I shook my head, saying, "I don't believe in friends. It is an article I have never met with, and doubt its existence." On the whole, I gave him to understand how poorly I appreciated a drunkard's friendship, and disliking intrusion, I took my hat and left the house for a walk. About eleven o'clock I returned, and found the mysterious stranger where I left him four hours previously. Conrad, the bartender, a so-called friend of mine, informed me that this man inquired about me a number of times, and had resolved to await my return. I, however, managed to escape his attention, and retired for the night. The next day at noon he met me again at my boarding-house, and insisted on paying for drinks. I consented, provided he would take something light. He agreed. The dinner-bell rang. I excused myself, and followed its sound. After dinner was over I left the house unnoticed, and went to work. In the evening he was at his post again, and this time I found it hard to shake him off. He appeared sober

and decent. Among other things he told me that he lived in Boston, Mass., and would sail for home on the morrow at six o'clock P. M., and desired me to accompany him, and make his house my home, and he would be an affectionate father to me; and he assured me that I would soon learn to love his only daughter, and I should be a wealthy and happy man all my life. His sweet words, however, made no impression on my mind, and setting forth an especial appointment for the hour, I bade him good-night. The next day I was late for dinner, and made my way direct to the dining-room. Here I was told that a gentleman wished to see me at the bar-room. I went there immediately, and Conrad introduced me to a finely dressed and noble-looking man, saying, "Jake, this gentleman has been waiting for you some time." At which the visitor arose from his seat, extending his hand to me with, "My young friend!" Before this I was rather surprised; but hearing his faltering voice, I recognized in him my old intruder, and although somewhat astonished, I felt at ease. Again he opened his batteries of affec-

tion upon me, and sought to persuade me to surrender to him. He repeated his language of last night, and added that his better half died a few months ago, that he came South partly on mercantile business, and partly to disperse his grief, which he failed to accomplish in a two weeks' spree. He offered me references on the best houses in Savannah, in order to carry his point; but I turned a deaf ear to his entreaties. Finally, when finding himself unsuccessful, he desired to know the cause of my refusal. I pointed to my sick brother in another part of the room, and told him that I meant to be with the patient until the end. He seemed pleased with the answer, and after a moment's pause he said with a joyful countenance, "My young friend, I have adopted your mode of drinking. I will drink only when I am thirsty, and then it shall be something light;" and we parted.

My brother's health did not improve, and he sought relief in the interior. A few weeks afterwards I followed him to Augusta, Ga. Here also he was failing, and in a few weeks more we went to Columbia, S. C. He re-

mained here only a month, and meant to return to Baltimore. On reaching Charlestown, S. C., he found himself incapable to proceed to the hospital, where he lingered but a few days, and died.

Unable to find employment in Columbia, I took the cars to Augusta, and from there to Atlanta, Ga., and to Montgomery, Ala., supposing my brother to have arrived safely in Baltimore and be cared for by his friends. My intention was to go to New Orleans, but arriving at Montgomery, my money was spent, and I was compelled to take a situation as bar-tender at $12 per month. Saving two months' wages, I returned to Savannah. When I reached there I was penniless. After much exertion I obtained a boarding-house, and also employment at the Central Railrood upholstering seats for passenger-cars. After I was settled, I despatched a letter to Baltimore concerning brother John, and in a few days received the sad news of his death. Doubting the news, I started for Charleston, and found his baggage and his grave. I was comfortless, and sought relief among my friends

in Baltimore. But again my funds diminished, and I returned to Savannah. Finding my former situation filled, I went as bartender for $18 per month. It was a hard place, fights occurring almost daily, and several times I had pistols snapped at me. After some months I started a concern of my own, consisting of a grocery store and bar-room. Things went on well. About six months after, the place burned down. I resorted to my trade again. In the mean time I applied for the insurance on the place, $500. Payment was delayed, and I commenced a suit against the company, which was finally lost, with several hundred dollars additional expenses. In a few months more I concluded to work for others no longer, but go on my own hook again. About midsummer, 1854, I opened an upholstering shop. Just as I was well established the yellow-fever broke out. Whoever could raise money left the city, and I would have followed, but my last dollar was invested in my store, and I had to stay. No business was transacted in the city for several months, except by undertakers. The number

of deaths increased to sixty-two per day. Just at this time I was overtaken by the terrible epidemic, but was yet able to inform a neighbor of my condition. Very soon he was at my side with a hot foot-bath, calomel, mustard, ice, snakeroot and salt boiled together, and gruel. He put my feet into a pail of steaming water, made me swallow ten grains of calomel, covered the greater part of my body with mustard-plasters, forced me to take a pint of snakeroot and salt, put me to bed with ice on my head, left some gruel for nourishment, and went away. Half an hour later he returned, looked at me, smiled, and said, "It is well; the fever is broke, and if you will do as I tell you, you will recover." I promised to do his bidding, and was told to lie perfectly quiet, to take a cup of snakeroot every hour, to keep plenty of ice on my head, and when thirsty to take a cup of gruel, and he left. In about two hours he returned with a fresh supply of ice, snakeroot, and some refreshments, renewed his instructions, and bade me good-night.

This calamity came upon me most unex-

pectedly. I felt cowardly, and doubted my recovery. About midnight I fell asleep. The next morning my physician arrived shortly after I awoke. I felt better, and asked him to be released from my bed. "Oh," said he, "you are not over it yet; but if you will comply with my orders as you have done, the victory is yours." "All right," said I; "command, and I will obey." "Well," said he, "you can dispense with the ice and mustard, but must continue the snakeroot every two hours, for," continued he, "there is yet a good deal of fever in you which must come out." I complied, but became so weak that I could not rise alone. "This," said he, "is the proper way to cure the Yellow Jack." All medicines were removed now, and replaced by chicken soup and other delicious dishes. Two days later I was up visiting my good friend, for in him I found a true one. Among other things I asked him for my bill due him for services rendered. "Never mind that," said he; "the Lord will settle for it." "Ah," said I, "my mother's God, whom I have forgotten so many years." I felt ashamed, and

wept. "Surrender your heart," continued he, "to your mother's God now, while you commence a new life, and while he has so graciously delivered you from your death-bed, and you will become a good and happy man." I promised to amend, thanked him for his kindness, and returned to my room, saying to myself, "Had I died, I would have died like a dog, without God, without hope."

Cold weather set in; Yellow Jack disappeared; the people returned, and business became brisk. My physical strength returned; fears of death and thoughts of eternity vanished; money came in plentifully; my passions became as strong as ever; business was neglected. For a while I closed the store at noon, afterwards early in the forenoon, with a notice on the door:

OPEN AT FOUR O'CLOCK P. M.;

but seldom was I there at that hour. High-low-jack-and-the-game generally kept me busy all night. I never played for money, but often for drinks and cigars. But before spring I saw the fruits of my living. I had much

time to myself. No one troubled me with their orders, and my only chance was to wind up. I sold off at auction, and left for Charleston, S. C. Here I concluded to turn over a new leaf. Consequently I shunned all vicious places, started a vinegar manufactory, devoted all my time to it, made two hundred gallons of vinegar per day, but could not find ready sale for it, for a vinegar factory was something new in this part of the country. Again I sold out, and went to Columbia, S. C.

Here I opened an upholstery and mattress shop, was doing well, and meant to stay; but my discontented spirit would not let me rest. After a few months I resorted again to the auctioneer's hammer, and left for Spartanburg, S. C. This is a village in the mountains of about four hundred inhabitants and three colleges. On surveying the place I thought a confectionery and fancy store would pay here. Two hundred dollars was my all in all. I rented a house, sent to Charleston for fancy goods, fruit, cigars, etc., procured flour, sugar, molasses, etc., on time, bought a large stove, and tried my luck at making candy and

cakes. The first three lots were spoiled. Finally I succeeded in baking cakes, and placed them in a showcase. But I failed in making candy, not having the necessary machinery, so I sent to the city for some. In the mean time a sign was placed over the door:

J. M——,

FRENCH CONFECTIONER.

The goods arrived, and the place was finely fitted up with ladies' and gentlemen's private saloons. Things went on extremely well; I was coining money; but the evil one soon crept in, and I was driven out. It occurred in this wise: A few of the fast young students desired me to keep something stronger than lemonade and ginger-pop. Accordingly I sent for a few cases of French brandy, which was duly appreciated by them, and especially by the officers of the town. But my inexperienced friends loved it better than their books, and frequently were seen intoxicated. The faculty found it out, protested against my conduct, and brought a suit against me, which

I postponed from time to time until I could find a purchaser for my establishment, after which I disappeared. The amount realized was $800, bills being paid.

In a few days I was in Charleston buying a stock of goods for cash, which I shipped for Orangeville, S. C. Here also a fashionable confectionery was something new, and some of the young men expressed their delight by seeing their town so greatly improved. Just as I opened the store for the first time, the county sheriff made his appearance with a paper in his hand. Knowing the gentleman, my heart began to fail me. He entered, bowed cordially, and inquired for Mr. M——.

"I am at your service," was my reply.

"Do you know a Mr. Z——?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," was answered.

"Where is he now?" he asked.

"I left him a week ago at Lawrence C. H., S. C. Since then I have not seen nor heard from him," was my answer.

"He mysteriously disappeared at Lawrence," continued the officer, "forgetting to pay house rent and other bills."

On hearing this I closed my store, shipped the goods for Lawrence, opened at Mr. Z——'s old stand, and soon was in a flourishing condition.

About this time hatred against abolitionists became visible on all sides, and I soon found myself in a hot-bed beyond endurance. I succeeded in getting a purchaser. In three days I was in New York with $2,000, and in a few days more I was on high ocean, bound for Queenstown. Thence I took the steamer to Bristol, the cars to London, Paris, and Zurich, arriving at my native town on the last day of the year 1859.

The reception tendered me was grand, and I was supposed to be the happiest man under the sun, for no one else ever returned from America. But I was far from being happy. The little monitor within me would bestir itself after a season of pleasures, and cause me many sorrowful and sleepless hours. Pleasure became a burden, and I longed for something which seemed to be out of my reach.

After six months' roaming to and fro, wasting my substance in riotous living, I returned

to New York. Here I engaged in the rum traffic, and bought the lease, stock, and fixtures of a porterhouse. Shortly after opening this place I attended a ball at Mozart Hall, and on returning in the morning, found my store burned down; and I was sent to Sing-Sing prison for the term of twelve years and three months, to lament the follies of a fast and ill-spent life.

CONVERSION OF THE AUTHOR.

IT was on a dark, gloomy, stormy day — November, 1861 — when, in a most melancholy state of mind, I was sitting on my couch in a lonely cell of New York City Prison, looking upon the things about me—four gray walls, with an iron door on one side, and a small window near the ceiling on the other side, and a bed, consisting of a dirty sack partly filled with straw, and some torn blankets, meditating upon my intolerable lot, condemning the acts of brutal officers, who cruelly cast me into prison, irrespective of the highly cherished estimation of myself. Cursing the day of my departure from home, cursing the day of my birth and my very existence and the whole human race; realizing most acutely the horrors of my inexpressible condition, a stranger in a strange land, without a friend or a dollar in the world; deprived of all comforts

and necessaries of life, despised and forsaken by all men, with a fair prospect for a long term in stateprison; bitterly hating all around me, and even myself and every thing else that came before me. In such a state of mind, filled with blackness of darkness, and surroundings which represented hell more perfectly than I could ever imagine, I was confronted by an old and rather poorly-dressed gentleman. After reading my name above the door, he cast his eyes through the bars, and smilingly asked:

"Is there a German in here?"

Reluctantly rising from my couch of meditation, wishing him and every other intruder ten thousand miles away from me, I walked to the door, and in a very disagreeable manner said:

"I speak that language. What is your desire?"

"Oh, nothing special," said he. "I am a clergyman from Williamsburgh, and being in the city to-day, and having an hour to spare, I thought I would visit my brethren in affliction."

"Brethren in affliction — hypocrite thou art," said I to myself. But assuming an honest face, I told him that I was thankful for his kindness, and hoped that his errands of mercy would result to his satisfaction. After a short pause, he continued:

"Have you any friends in the city?"

"None in the world," was my reply.

"Any means?" he inquired.

"Not a dollar."

"What 's your crime?"

"Arson in the second."

"Any prospect to get out?"

"None—without money."

"Well," said he in a somewhat broken voice, "yours is truly a pitiable position; would that I could help you, but I can only bring you the consolation of the gospel of Christ. Will you accept him? You say you have no friend. *Jesus Christ is your Friend.*"

"That is all very well," I replied; "but he will not and cannot reach my present case. Money alone can save me now."

"Well," continued he in a very tender and fatherly way, "well, would it not be wise, as

you have no money and no friends to assist you, and thus are unable to gain your point, to make your peace with God, and receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, who is a substitute for every thing desirable. Surely he will find a way which will lead you to happiness, and perhaps release you from prison. Remember he says, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things will be added unto you.'"

I shook my head, saying: "My only point is to obtain liberty, of which I had been so wrongfully deprived."

Finding that he could not gain access to my heart, he departed with a "*God bless you.*"

"Fanatic!" murmured I after he had gone. "Jesus Christ my friend! I'd like to know what he has to do with me or I with him? It is all nonsense."

Shortly after this two Sisters of Mercy, from the convent on Houston-street, New York, made their appearance. I was more inclined to listen to them than to my former visitor, for I thought religion far more becoming to poor, old, sickly women, than to able-bodied and sensible men.

"Are you a Catholic?" asked the eldest of the two.

"No, I am nothing at all, as far as religion is concerned," was my reply in a careless manner.

"No religion at all!" exclaimed she with surprise, while her disciple opened her beautiful eyes to some extent.

"None," I rejoined, amusing myself at their spiritual energy.

"Don't you say your prayers?" she continued.

"I have *none* to say," I replied.

"Have you no prayer-book?"

"No."

"Would you like to have one?"

"I don't know as I would."

"But don't you ever think of your soul?"

"I think a great deal about getting out of this place."

"But, my good friend," she continued with a mother's love, "suppose you should be taken sick and die, what would become of your soul?"

This question reached my heart, but be-

ing cowardly disposed, I waived it, and said:

"Madam, it is twenty years since I left my father's roof, and have seen a goodly part of the world, but have as yet failed to see any thing of this so-called religion. I believe it to be a thing yet to be created."

Again they seemed to be astonished, and after a pause she said:

"Did you ever live among good Catholics?"

"I don't know as I have," was my reply. "There is one in the cell with me, who is now gone to court, who very frequently gets down on his knees, but whose ordinary conversation is well spiced with profanity, filthiness, etc."

"Can that be?" she rejoined.

"It is even so," I replied.

"But," said she, "he is a criminal, and ought not to be held up as a specimen of God's converting grace."

"Well," responded I, "should I perchance meet such a specimen, I would consider it a new revelation, and will seek counsel and ad-

vice of him. All the Catholics, however, I have come in contact with heretofore were profane men."

After exchanging a few more words, they bade me farewell.

A few days more and the priest came along. From his first words I ascertained that he had seen the Sisters, and was well posted about the man in No. 69. Among other things, he told me that he was a Frenchman, and lived, some years ago, in my native land. As often as he ventured to turn the conversation heavenward, as often I turned upon the beauty and glory of the Swiss Alps; and he too retired unsuccessful.

The next day a finely-dressed gentleman, with a package of tracts in hand, made his round on the gallery. After passing one or two of them into every cell, he disappeared. This mute preacher's sermons I considered unworthy of my esteem, and I put them out of my reach.

The Sisters and the priest renewed their visits from week to week and sought to do me good, and in various ways to persuade me

of the power of their religion. They made some impression on my mind, and I considered them *good people*. Protestant ladies also visited the prison frequently, but would seldom stop or tarry at my cell.

One day I was approached by the chaplain of the prison, who, among other things, kindly asked me to accept a tract. To show my appreciation of his kindness, I took it, at the same time despising him and his tract, promising in my heart not to read it. He too endeavored to show me the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and point out the only Saviour to redeem me from my fallen state. I told him that I was no worse than others, and if others get to heaven, I stood a good chance also. After he had gone, I cast the tract on my bed. It so fell as to leave the title in full view, and I involuntarily read, "Don't Put it Off." A little curious to know what it referred to, I picked it up, and read:

"Most men acknowledge that something must be done in this life in order to inherit that which is to come, and most men mean to prepare for eternity before they die. One

man died while inspecting a picture-gallery; another while reading a paper; another while delivering an address; another while sitting at dinner; another while walking in a garden," etc. And the still small voice within me began to whisper: Suppose you should die in prison, and this day, what would become of your soul? The almighty arm of God was upon me. My eyes were opened by degrees, and my proud, stubborn, and rebellious heart was broken. Great mountains of sins arose before me. Floods of evil deeds and words, committed in early youth, flashed across my mind, and I became an object of extreme misery and wretchedness, crying from my inmost soul with the prophet of old: "Is there sorrow like unto my sorrow?" It was then and there that I first prayed from the abundance of a sin-stricken soul: "God be merciful to me a sinner." This, however, was but the beginning of a struggle with sin and Satan, which continued for two long and weary years of heaviness and distress. I prayed with burning tears, and cried to God with great agony. I wrestled with the great

Spirit, but it was useless. He would not bless me. The chaplain kindly presented me with a Bible and tracts, and I read and prayed and conversed with good people, but in vain. I remained the most miserable of God's creatures. I was awakened, and my own conscience condemned me. Hell opened itself before me as my just portion, and I felt as if I would fall into it and be swallowed up by a lake of fire. There was no peace, no rest, and the fear of hell only prevented me from committing suicide.

After five months' imprisonment, I was brought to trial, was convicted, and sentenced to Sing-Sing prison for the term of twelve years and three months. This increased my distress greatly.

On arriving at my new home, I was employed in a hat-factory, with a hundred and fifty other convicts, men who were generally devoid of self-respect. My state of mind remained unchanged, and I resolved, above all things, to obtain rest. I repaired to the chaplain, Rev. John Luckey; but on arriving at his office, the evil one suggested that I was

too insignificant a creature to command the attention of so venerable a man as Father Luckey, and I refrained from my purpose.

Night after night I called upon God, pleading for help and resolving to amend, and spend the following day more pleasing to God and myself. On rising in the morning, I would repeat my requests and resolutions, affirm my vows, and go to my work with a determination to defeat the devil whenever visible; but no sooner did I meet him in his many various ways and forms, than I found myself out-generaled. My resolutions and determinations proved to be mere air-castles, and in spite of all my prayers and resolutions, I found myself continually sinking. I acquired many bad habits from my fellows, such as chewing tobacco, stealing on a small scale, using profane language, etc. This, however, did not satisfy my hungry soul, and I continued to storm the gates of heaven with as much violence as ever, very often despairing of hope, and considering the great heart of God for ever barred against me.

Among my shopmates was one called pious

Jim. I soon formed his acquaintance, with the intention to learn of him how to obtain the pearl of great price, but found in him a profane son of the church of Rome. The blessed Virgin, St. Patrick, and other saints, were his element. He was greatly rejoiced to learn that I wanted to become a better man, and offered to assist me in all possible ways. He possessed some twenty or more Catholic books, which were presented to him from time to time by the Sisters of Mercy. These he persuaded me to read, with the assurance that they would make a good Christian of me.

Thirsting most ardently after the pure milk of the true religion, I read them all through, but at the end of reading found myself as far from happiness as ever, and my condition grew worse. Every source had failed me, and the gates of heaven were still closed. Too blind and ignorant and weak to find my way to the cross of Christ, and too proud to ask any one, even our most kind chaplain, I groped in darkness, seeking, sighing, praying, and wrestling with all my mind and strength, earnestly desiring rest, but finding none.

One day, mustering my courage, I resolved to unbosom my heart to the chaplain, and ask for help and guidance. For this purpose I repaired to his office, firmly resolved to carry out my intention; but on reaching there I met a shopmate with whom I had been quarrelling a few days before, and my heart failed me. Again and again I repeated my visits, but never gained the point in view. On one of these visits I discovered a stock of tracts, which were served gratis; and obtaining permission, I resorted to this fountain very often, drawing two hundred and more at a time. I was greatly relieved, and rejoiced at my newly-found treasure, and hoped in and through them to find that long-desired rest. They were precious to me, and became my constant companions. Generally rising before dawn, I would be at my grated door with tract in hand, longing for the return of day to feed my hungry soul with little messengers until breakfast-time. After finishing my day's work, I would resort to my little bundle of papers, and keep at them as long as I could see the print, deriving much consolation from

them, and yet I remained unhappy. Finally, after many months of fierce warfare, I chanced to read the sweet and most precious words:

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

These words brought a final change and consolation to my heart. My eyes were now clear. I saw my folly in rejecting Him who alone can help; the long neglected and despised Jesus, who ever sought to embrace me in his arms of love. My proud and stiff heart was melted down, my stubborn and selfish will was subdued. My soul was filled with peace, and I was at rest. The storm of a sin-stricken soul ceased to cast up mire and dirt, and there was a great calm. Tears of sorrow were changed into tears of joy. Jesus met the chief of sinners, and their meeting was a glorious one. The sinner endeavored to show his appreciation to his glorious Visitor; but as a little erring child rests sweetly on its loving and forgiving mother's bosom, so he too, not having courage to look up into His glorious face, sweetly reposed on his breast,

without finding expressions of gratitude from his overflowing soul.

My heart was changed, and with it my entire being and condition. My little cell became a palace. Jesus dwells there, and there is nothing wanting within me. I long for the return of night, that I may be with my God alone. Prayer, which had always proved a severe task, has become a delight. Self-examination, which was unknown to me, became a daily duty, which, through the instrumentality of the blessed Spirit, has done away with *self*, and instituted Jesus Christ in and over me. In due time the chief of sinners became humble as a child, who is now growing in grace, seeking where and how he might advance his Master's kingdom. His closet is his dearest place; his workshop is his temple; his neighbor is his brother; his joy is Jesus, his life is Christ, and his death will be glory.

Solitary Thoughts, Views, and Experience.

I AM filled with amazement in knowing that my heavenly Father has in so great mercy spared me unto the present. Why should he stoop and reach down so low? Why expend his wisdom, his power, his love, and costly beneficence on a heart so vile as mine?

The question now is not, "What must I do to be saved?" but the question, "How may I sufficiently thank him for the great salvation he has so graciously bestowed on me?" is continually occupying my mind. How may I glorify his precious name, and by what possible means may I come nearer to my God, and how may I become more like himself? The prospect of drawing nearer to him day after day fills my soul with gratitude, love,

and joy, too deep for words. Oh, that I had the wings of an angel, to soar at once up into heaven, and remain with Jesus my Saviour for ever!

However dreary my lot, however dark my path, however low my condition, however loathsome and narrow my cell, one thing is sure: it is the abiding-place of the most high God. The Angel of the Covenant is there, and in the darkest night of grief this dwelling has light and hope and peace.

To be in my right mind, I must have the mind that was in Christ. I must follow his footsteps, glorify God in every act, word, and thought, and as I proceed in my pilgrimage, must strive to grow in the knowledge of Christ. Thus may I be accepted of the Father, and finally be an occupant of one of the mansions in his glorious kingdom.

It is true my pilgrimage is unusually wearisome, but I am frequently resting under the refreshing shade of the tree of life, feasting

on its delicious fruits, drinking from the hidden springs of salvation, and bathing my guilty and polluted soul in the blood-cleansing Fountain of Calvary. Thus enjoying life under the most adverse circumstances, in all its beauty and glory—fixing my eyes on the precious Jesus—all the darkness, sorrow, and pain disappear, and I am permitted to swim, as it were, in the boundless ocean of his eternal love. Glory, glory, glory be to God for ever and ever!

I will strive to inscribe on my heart what manner of person I ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness. I will so walk that it may be evident to all about me that I am indeed Christ's.

I want to be a sturdy, resolute, and outspoken man, firmly rooted in Christ, drawing from the deeps of the mysterious well of salvation, diving to the very bottom of the fathomless ocean of love, growing in wisdom, and bearing much fruit to the glory of God and the happiness of my fellow-beings, seeking

where and how I may gladden the hearts of unhappy men.

I have set my mind, my affections, and all on that for which Christ died, for which angels watch, for which saints pray, for which men unceasingly labor, and for which I was created, namely: my soul's eternal rest. Oh, believe this, my soul, and think well on it: thou shalt be eternally embraced in the arms of that love which is from everlasting, and which will extend to everlasting; of that love which brought the Son of God's eternal love from heaven to earth, from earth to the cross, from the cross to the grave, and from the grave to glory; of that love which was weary, hungry, tempted, scorned, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crucified, and pierced; which did fast, pray, teach, heal, weep, sweat, bleed, and die—that glorious love, oh, my soul, will eternally embrace thee.

I have insured my life in that company of which Jesus Christ is president, secretary, and treasurer.

He is always in my thoughts. He is my delight and the supreme object of my affections. I have made him my all in all for life, death, and eternity.

Life is sweet and precious when it can be laid out for Jesus.

In Jesus Christ there is pardon for the past, and restraining power for the future. In him there is education and development in all godliness. In him there is life which lifts the soul above temptations, sorrow, fear, dying, and death, yea, even above judgment itself.

I believe in Jesus Christ; that is, I receive him as the only-begotten and well-beloved of the Father. I trust and live in him; rely on him for all things necessary for time and eternity; walk and act in him; eat, drink, sleep, and converse in him; and whatever I do or leave undone, do or leave undone to his glory. I strive to imitate him, follow, love, serve, and obey him; and this, I believe, is the essence of the Christian's religion, and this is

according to St. Paul, and I am persuaded that he was not mistaken.

I have innumerable and unspeakably sweet communions in my cell with my God alone, which induces me to praise him day and night. In his strength, guided by his Spirit, and sustained by his grace, I am pushing forward. How will my soul bless the Lord when in his presence I will behold in reality what now is revealed to me in the vision of faith.

I am overlooking this dark and dreary place, and the dazzling and false grandeur of the world, pierce through the clouds of vanity which intercept, and fix my eyes on the Sun of righteousness only, and all darkness disappears, and there is joy in my soul and among the angels in heaven.

The same Jesus, who can make a dying-bed soft as downy pillows are, is able and willing, if I will only let him, to make these gloomy walls far more glorious than the walls of the noblest palace. Yes, I am at times

happier than a prince on his throne, and would indeed not make the exchange, as worldly riches and honor and happiness are but passing vanities compared with the unspeakable joy, peace, and happiness of a humble Christian. Oh, how may I bless the Lord for this sweet revelation.

It is faith and prayer combined which will save a soul. The form of prayer alone is insufficient. I might have a machine to manufacture prayer, and rattle them off as fast as lightning, but they would be of no avail without faith.

Language, O God, is inadequate to express the wondrous works which thou hast wrought, and the great blessings which thou art continually pouring into my soul.

Ignorance is the armor which partly shields the conscience from the sword of the Spirit.

I have ascertained that my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,

full of unrighteousness, fornications, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, filth, vanity, debate, pride, hatred, dispute, and other products of hell, and these all must leave me, for Jesus will have it so.

My highest ambition is to proclaim to my poor lost brothers and sisters His incomprehensible loving-kindness and unsearchable riches, and point them to the inexhaustible fountain of eternal love.

Why should I complain of my loneliness, when Jesus Christ and the hosts of heaven are continually with me? Why should I envy another's lot, when I possess all that the faculties of my soul can desire? Why should I complain of poverty, when the riches of Christ are mine? How can I be called an unfortunate being, when I know that there is no happier soul on the entire globe. Why is it that men call me ignorant, while I am guided and governed by the unerring Spirit of truth? It is because the world is blind in spirituality.

I am rich. The unsearchable treasures of Jesus Christ are mine. He himself is mine. God is mine. Heaven and every thing else is at my command and disposal, although I possess not a dollar of this world's goods.

I praise God that my soul does not inquire with the poet:

> "Where is the blessedness I knew
> When first I saw the Lord?"

Nay, his blessedness followed me from the hour of his appearance to my sin-sick soul to this day, and I am sure it will follow me to the day when I shall appear before his judgment-seat to give an account of the things done and left undone in the body. This is a solemn thought, but not in the least disturbs my peace, for Jesus says: "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" and, "Fear not, little flock; it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." While his word is replete with invitations and promises, and as he is faithful enough to fulfil them all, I have nothing to fear. Besides, I will hide

myself in his wounds, so that I cannot be seen, and all will be well.

A sinful thought, when resisted, is not sin, but temptation. A sinful thought, when cherished, is not temptation, but sin.

I have learned that nothing in this world is worthy, is deserving of my admiration or regard, unless God is in it to ennoble and sanctify it.

I have submitted myself to Him who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," and who bears his little ones in his own arms.

God has placed me in this world to be useful to my fellow-men, and to prepare for the world to come. In order to do this, the glory of his holy name and the edification of my own soul, as well as the edification of the souls of my fellow-sinners for our eternal happiness, are the two standpoints which must occupy my entire being, soul and body, continually.

It is indeed my desire and determination to follow the footprints of my Saviour more closely hereafter, that I may become capable of doing what is pleasing to my heavenly Father.

Although I am yet but a babe in my Master's household, yet I have so fully tasted that the Lord is good, so very good and gracious, yea, so very merciful, I long to praise him as I ought, and to be entirely lost in him. O precious Saviour, substance of all delight, glory of heaven, joy of the believer, refuge of the sinner, tune my soul with heavenly melodies, and enable me to sing the songs of the saints in light! Rev. 15:3. Come, thou blessed Spirit, instruct and help me to give due honor and glory to Him who was slain for me! Oh, where shall I find words to praise thy great and sweet name? Where shall I obtain language to describe the fulness of thy goodness, of which even I, unworthy worm, have been permitted to partake so abundantly? O blessed Jesus, human wisdom has not invented language to do thee

justice! Yea, thou art ever visiting me with trains of mercies– mercies which thy divine love alone can fathom!

Oh, how sweet are the gifts from Him who is called the Father of every good and perfect gift! How precious is his renewing, purifying, cheering, strengthening, encouraging, teaching, directing, guiding, enlightening, sanctifying Spirit! How powerful his everlasting arm, how boundless his grace, how exceedingly sweet his love! I am going to hold on to him with all the strength he gives me. I got both my arms around his neck, embracing him with all the faculties of my craving soul, and will never let him go. I am sure he will not shake me off, although my sins are many and as great as mountains. Yet his love is still greater and powerful, and outweighs all the sins of the world; consequently our union is eternal as he is almighty, and nothing imaginable can separate us. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and wisdom, and riches, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing, and adoration for ever and ever!

What a sweet solace to the trembling but loving soul, when the destroying angel, who swore that time shall be no longer, shall make his appearance, to hide itself in the wounds of a dying Saviour, and to be carried by him to that glorious mansion in the eternal city whose maker and builder is God; where there is no more sorrow, nor pain, neither death; no prison, and no more infernal spirits to embitter its peaceful hours with wormwood and gall, nor any thing else which disturbs the joy of the soul, and where God himself will wipe away the tears from all eyes! Oh, what a glorious hope is this!

My soul, with your fellow-men deal justly, with the evil one act rashly. In your inmost soul love mercy, and with your God walk humbly.

I know and see and feel the universal depravity of my entire being more and more from day to day. A wicked, hell-daring life is the life of the unconverted sinner. I have seen how vile a thing sin is, and by the tenor

of the law which I have transgressed, the least sin deserves eternal punishment. I am conscious of my undone condition, and feel myself condemned. I am aware of my utter insufficiency to promote true happiness, or to cure my misery, or to save my soul. I am convinced that the end of happiness is eternal life in God. The way to it is through Jesus Christ. In him I find an effectual remedy for each and every spiritual disease. I am familiar with the greatness of his power, with the fulness of his promises, and the freeness of his salvation. What a beauty there is in the Pearl of great price!

The Carnal Heart.

The unconverted heart is a dry spot; no green leaf can be found in it. The power of iniquity has destroyed every sprouting sprig. It is a desert, a dwelling-place of dragons and vipers and reptiles of hell. The fragrant evergreen you cannot find in it, nor the beautiful shrubbery of God's love. In vain do you seek childlike simplicity and heartfelt devotion, or love for prayer. The little flower

Humility is not there, nor can the blooming Patience be found. The glorious Beauty of Holiness is invisible, and the precious perfumed Charity bears no fruit therein. The spreading tree of Love, Faith, and Hope has not taken root, nor the vine which bears fruit to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The dew of heaven does not descend upon it, neither does the stream from the River of Life moisten its parched soil. Oh, the unconverted heart is a dry spot! It is dead to all that is good and precious in the sight of God. "Search me, O Lord God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," and make my heart a fruit-bearing garden of the Most High.

When Alexander the Great met Diogenes, the Greek philosopher, finding him sitting in a tub, enjoying the warmth of the sun, the philosopher being requested by the king to ask any favor of him, which he would willingly grant, merely said: "Don't stand be-

tween me and the sun;" which caused Alexander to exclaim, "If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes!"

Diogenes was a heathen, lived at a time and in a land where the God of revelation was not known; but as he was a man of common sense, he knew that there was a mightier power in existence than mere man, and this power he as a heathen justly recognized in the sun, which gave life and light to the earth, and as an honest man he loved and worshiped this supreme power. He would not permit the greatest of human beings, not even Alexander the Great, who sincerely desired to bestow upon him honor and treasures, stand between him and the object he worshiped.

As my heart panted after wisdom, I have learned a practical lesson from this heathen. He would allow no perishing substance to stand between him and his supposed god, neither will I allow any passing idol to creep into my soul, and stand between me and my God, Jesus Christ. He would not exchange the pleasure and happiness which he derived

from studying the beauty and luxury of the sun for any worldly greatness or pleasures. Neither will I give the perpetual rays of love from the Sun of righteousness, the inexpressible and eternal blessing and pleasures which I derive from studying Jesus Christ, for all the great Alexanders, for all the nobility, for all the treasures of a perishing world. More than this, I will not permit any creature, be it mother, sister, brother, wife, child, or friend, to stand between me and my Creator. I will not worship any one but Him who keeps me in being. My motto is: The Creator first, the creature next. And as to the goods of this world, I will take care that the burden does not become too heavy and overpower me, and hide the face of the Lord from me. Nor will I let its pressure weigh me down into the bottomless pit, whence there is no escape; rather will I throw the cargo overboard, than to sink vessel, cargo, crew, and all, and with Diogenes I will hold on to the object which gives me just what my soul is craving for. Yes, I am going to hold on to Him who sought and found and picked me up in the wilder-

ness; not only famishing and dying, but really dead in trespasses and sin—just as I had fallen from Satan's train of victims to the eternal burning. Yes, I will hold to Him who found me in a most despicable state; who put me on his shoulder, and carried me to his Father's house; who bound up my broken heart, dressed my wounds, poured oil and wine into them, bathed me with tears of love, washed me in his own blood, nursed and carried me in his bosom; and, precious Jesus, what hast thou not done for me! If there is any thing within or about me which is not thy work, I pray thee cast it out, destroy it, and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Whatever is not of thee is of the enemy, and is disagreeable to thee and the Father, and even to my fellow-men. Oh, come and give me more of that oil which heals every spiritual disease, and which is a most wholesome refreshment for the weary traveler in this vale of tears!

I will go out, should the good Lord permit me to leave this place once again, into the

byways and hedges, and compel them to come in to the glorious feast which Jesus has prepared, well knowing that all the worldling calls rich and great are but passing vanities and shadows compared to the substantial, perfect, and lasting happiness which can only be derived from the assurance of having served God with willingness, cheerfulness, and ability. I will strive to multiply the army of the Captain of my salvation, that his name might receive due honor and glory for evermore.

Looking unto Jesus.

Whenever Satan makes his appearance in any of his various ways and forms, I fly directly to the cross with the words:

> "Jesus, Saviour, Son of God,
> Let me to thy bosom fly."

He graciously opens his arms, receives me, and my troubled soul is at rest. It beholds the tormentor disappear! Oh that I could persuade every newly converted soul to practice this sublime habit: As soon as an evil

thought arises in the mind, to go immediately to Jesus and tell him of the trouble; or to think of him, speak to him, pray to him, associate with him, and walk with and in him; look at his unspeakable beauty, meditate on his godly work and character, suffering, and intercession, and finally, to explore the regions of his boundless kingdom.

Time thus spent, I have found to be the best investment that human experience and knowledge can produce. Had I acquired this habit when my stubborn heart first yielded to the Spirit of God and to his constraining love, what an ocean of misery, sorrow and woe, fears and doubts would have been lost to me! A happy loss indeed. Oh, that I could raise my voice and reach every soul on the entire globe with the sweetest of the apostle's words:

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

I know of no other sentiment uttered by mortal man which is more estimable to the man who knows himself aright.

It was by looking to Jesus that legions of infernal spirits were driven out of me, and I

was permitted to sit at the feet of my glorious Redeemer clothed in my right mind. It was by looking unto Jesus, after spending many years in sin and rebellion against my Maker, following the devices of my own evil and deceitful heart, seeking where and how I might promote the kingdom of darkness, and after a struggle of several bitter years against the world, the flesh, and the devil, that my sin-stricken soul was visited by the Spirit of God, who commanded peace, and there was a great calm. It is by looking unto Jesus that these walls become far more glorious than the walls of a palace. It is by looking to him that I am enabled to walk close with my God. In short, it is by looking to him, and through his grace, that I am what I am—*one of his little ones*, bought by his own blood, to dwell with him for ever. Oh, how sweet, how precious, how glorious is such a hope! Yes, it is pleasing to be one day transferred from a dungeon to that garden where Jesus dwells, and where he waters every plant himself. How may I thank him sufficiently for this hope? But the beauty of it is, this hope

grows rapidly. It grows as fast as a mustard plant. It becomes a large tree in one season. It becomes converted into assurance. It is no longer a hope; it is a reality that I will spend eternity with Him who is now preparing me to become acceptable to his Father and the saints.

Thus I have found a remedy, in looking to Jesus, which will cure each and every spiritual malady. I fear the human agents of Satan more than himself, although I am assured that they cannot actually harm me; but it grieves my inmost soul so that I could weep bitter tears when I hear his precious name used in vain and his cause and people assaulted. This is what frequently restrains the perpetual happiness of my soul. Yet on the whole I have no reason to complain, for the Lord tells me: "As thy day so thy strength shall be;" and I have indeed always found it so. Never have I fought a battle where Christ and his people were assaulted but I came out conqueror. Has he not promised to be with us always, even unto the end? Is he not faithful to his promises? Where is the

man, woman, or child that can accuse him of breaking his word? Oh, that all might come and give him a fair trial! Truly, they would never repent of so wise an act, but would bring their friends along with them to the blessed fountain, that they, too, might drink from its stream and be for ever happy.

The highest virtue, according to Jesus Christ, is "love." Extremely miserable is he who is loveless, and thus merciless, and who refuses to be constrained by that eternal love which is revealed from God through Christ.

Brotherly love is the new spirit of the soul. It is not only the blossom, but it is the sum and substance, the root, the trunk, the whole power of the tree. Its fruits are, good works to the glory of God and the welfare of men.

Brotherly love, purity and truth, justice and honor are the crown jewels of a noble nature.

Pure love understands and speaks every language known in heaven and on earth.

The being who is destitute of brotherly love is a member of the family which constitutes the animal kingdom.

If Jesus is revealed to me better in one church than in another, I will frequent that church and help to support it, that his beauty become more conspicuous and many more poor sinners fall in love with him.

I find that God can be worshiped outside of the church as well as in it. I have seen him more graciously, and felt his presence more powerfully, in the dungeon than in any other place. Wherever I am, there he is too.

Oh, how I long to be of some use—to go out and tell them that the feast is ready, the table is set, and the Lord of the house is waiting to receive them—tell them of that precious Saviour who is casting his lines of love to every wandering soul, and who desires to draw them all to the mercy-seat and enfold them into his own arms, and who would enrich all men with the treasures of heaven.

Oh, how wonderful are the ways of God, how mysterious are his dealings with his creatures! Why should he select so unworthy a worm as I am to be an everlasting monument of grace? Why should the Holy Spirit stop at the gate of my dwelling and knock, and knock again, go his way, return and knock again, and plead to be admitted—repeat his visits day after day for twenty-nine long years? He knocked louder and louder from time to time; but the soul, which was dead in trespasses and sin, and which loved darkness rather than light, would not hear until he, before taking his final leave, broke the door open, entered in, bound its inmates, and cast them out to return no more, and took possession of the house to dwell there for ever.

It would be inexcusable in me to despise death, especially as I am convinced that it will conduct me into the presence of God and his holy angels and the just made perfect, where I may be one with them.

O blessed Jesus, how often hast thou consoled me in the dark hours of affliction! How

graciously hast thou sustained me while passing through the fiery furnace of tribulation! How wonderfully hast thou preserved me and filled me with peace and joy! Oh, how good, how exceedingly good is the Lord my Saviour! Hear what he says: "Be of good cheer; because I live, thou shalt live also." "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "I hasten to be gracious." Precious consolations!

While I live I will never disguise the truth nor speak language by which my Saviour might be grieved. I will inscribe on my heart that I must give an account for every idle word spoken and every vain thought cherished.

I have made the choice between the two eternal masters. I have made it in the presence of almighty God and men as witnesses. I am with all my soul determined to make the will of Christ the supreme law of my inner and outer life, not only in my relation directly to God, but in all my conduct towards my fellow-men. I will be governed by

the love of Jesus. Trusting to his mercy for pardon in all things where I come short, and depending on him for strength, I will make his work my business, and try, like him, to find my meat and drink in doing God's holy will.

The religion of Jesus Christ is the only power which can cleanse the soul from the leprosy of sin. Sometimes I look in wonder and amazement at myself, and find that I am almost cured of the detestable disease.

Self-denial for its own sake is useless. It is no religious act. But self-denial for the sake of others is a virtue practiced by Jesus Christ during his whole life.

I have sought first, according to divine Wisdom, the kingdom of heaven, and found it; and, glory be to God, all things are added unto me. Although my situation is somewhat unpleasant; yet, on the whole, I have great cause for thankfulness, for there is nothing wanting to complete my spiritual happiness.

The change produced by the grace of God is a radical change. It cures every disease and heals every wound, and the result is a joyous and happy life.

Where are that pride, hatred, and malice, where that stubbornness, ignorance, unbelief, and other inventions of the enemy, which had the sole control over me not very many years ago? Ah, I may as well ask where is the last winter's snow? The sun in the firmament has turned it into water. Even so has the Sun of righteousness melted the icy surface of my cold heart and turned it into living water—flowing streams which have no end.

I sincerely desire to be an instrument in my Master's hands to shape and fashion vessels for eternity.

To worship Christ is to worship God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Father of every good and perfect gift, the Fountain of love, the Friend of Sinners, and the Saviour

of mankind. He is a most precious and wonderful God, who often grants my requests before I ask them.

The Christian Structure.

Faith is its.....Foundation.
Prayer is its .....Four walls.
Wisdom is its .....Entrance.
Patience is its.....Windows.
Charity is its .....Covering.
Love to God is its .....Tower.
Holy will is its .....Lightning-rod.

Mine is a case that calls for rejoicing and not for sorrow, especially when I look back to the time when I entered this place—forsaken and despised by all men, grieved and tormented by the enemy within and without, overburdened with transgressions of the blackest kind. I came to Jesus for relief, and he was pleased to break the fetters of darkness and relieve me from the claws of Satan, and transferred me to the kingdom of God. Should I not rejoice and be exceedingly glad on be-

ing thus favored and promoted? Angels in heaven rejoiced over the transaction, whereas the devils in hell tremble.

Jesus Christ is the talisman of my soul. He gives me strength and courage in every conflict. He enables me to rise upon the hope of glory, and at death he opens the gate of the celestial city to me.

Most men are like the bird that builds its nest in the branches of a tree near the river. The bird is singing and is happy while the waters beneath murmur destruction and undermines the soil about the tree, till in some unexpected hour the tree falls with a crash into the stream, and then its home is gone, and the joyful singer is a wanderer. It is not so with the bird that builds its nest in the cleft of a rock. It dwells there unmolested; it raises its young undisturbed; it returns from year to year, and it enjoys life in the beauty and glory which were assigned to it by its Creator.

Even so did I take my abode in the cleft of

the Rock of ages, and find myself protected from all the storms, tempests, and torrents of hell and of a sinful world. The lion may roar, the wolf howl, and the scorpion sting, "yet I will fear no noise and no evil, for His rod and his staff they comfort me."

Oh, how unfortunate am I! How bitter is my lot! How exceedingly unhappy am I! This was the daily utterance of my sorrowing soul on entering this prison. But oh, how changed is my condition now! How sweet my portion, how exceedingly blessed am I under the patronage of a merciful Saviour. How precious art thou, O Jesus!

The sturdy oak of a hundred years is seemingly a useless thing. Its lofty branches are not visited by singing birds. Its shadow does not shelter the herds from the burning sun. It is not, until the woodman lays his axe on its base, when it dies, and is fashioned into all manner of useful things—ships, houses, furniture, etc., that it becomes of any use. So it is with man. Man seems to be of little

or no use until the eternal Woodman lays the two-edged sword of God's eternal truth upon him and cuts the trunk of the old Adam, and fashions him into the likeness of His own image, that he becomes useful. When the old man dies, the new man Christ Jesus commences his life in the soul. It is he who makes men, women, and children useful, and they become house and home to their fellowmen.

Ah, could I find language to do justice to the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ, how pleasing it would be to my soul. Human wisdom has not invented words to do this, and at best we have but a faint conception of its preciousness. At times, when I am alone, I have such sweet and rapturous visions of the love of God and the truths of his word, that I forget that I am in a body of flesh, forget that I am in prison, forget that I am in a vale of tears. It is then that I am, as it were, in the heavens above, in the holy of holies, knowing nothing of this world's tribulations or the cares of life.

Jesus designed his little ones to grow as fast as mustard plants, to stretch their boughs of love and good works all around and point heavenward.

Rejoice, O my soul, in the hour of tribulation, and think not that God is going to destroy you. He is only tuning you up a little, that you may the sweeter sing his praises of everlasting love.

To be full of goodness, full of love, full of cheerfulness, hope, and hopeful sympathy, causes a soul to leap for joy, and scatter blessings upon a troubled world and create joy in heaven.

The loving heart produces eyes as clear as crystal, which are often filled with precious pearls, but oftener with beams of godly love, strong enough to dispel all darkness in the community or household.

God's kindnesses to me are as numerous as the stars on the firmament. I am slow to

understand this, and feel my ungratefulness and unworthiness more and more. O Lord, change my heart again. It must be renewed from day to day, for the enemy is continually engaged to obtain and maintain his former possessions.

"I am the Way," says Jesus. He desires us to walk in him as we walk in the road which leads to and from our homes. He is a highway cast up for weary travellers to go and find rest in the celestial city.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad when thou art laid low in the chamber of affliction, for it is then that the Lord means to chisel thee and raise thee up a glorious monument in his everlasting kingdom.

The Christians who find self-examination and self-denial hard, should labor for their personal reconstruction.

God's promises are the comfort of my life. Without them I could not exist in this wild

waste of iniquity. How could I dwell in this polluted Sodom, where infernal spirits are continually spewing out products of hell? Were it not for the grace of God, I would sink under the influence of the evil one.

We are commanded "to rejoice in the Lord always." The soul which is in Christ can never be grieved, for he himself is pure joy and happiness, and whatever he animates is like him. The sun, moon, and stars—all nature, and whatsoever we behold, smile upon us in great beauty and lustre, and seem to rejoice in him.

Study! Study without rest,
It will not help thee aught.
The end of all philosophy
Is firm belief in God.

Some travelers speak of the beauty of an occasional rose they meet on the Swiss Alps. Others dwell joyously upon the comfort and preciousness of a flowing well they discover in the midst of a large and burning desert.

But nothing is more precious and glorious to the heaven-bound pilgrim, than to find a blooming and sweetly-perfumed flower, a well of living water, in so dark and gloomy a place as this is. Oh, how great is my joy to meet an occasional monument of grace! Lord, cultivate this barren land.

It is my duty not only to be good and do good, but to shine as a golden light in all places wherever I go, and to let the smiles of contentment rest upon my face continually.

A Christian should strive to ascertain his power and influence over others. He should set sail upon the ocean of duty, and should exercise every faculty of his soul in the conversion of sinners and to the glory of God.

The spring does not say: I will stand back until I can clothe every plant in beauty, and bring all the bounty of a glorious harvest under my wings. No, she casts loving glances all around her in February. In March she becomes more bold, and often ventures to pen-

etrate through lifeless bodies in the vegetable as well as the animal kingdom. In April we find her in a continual warfare with her rough sister. Her frosty predecessor will fight to the very last to maintain her power and influence over the earth; and even in May, when the beautiful and tender visitor has firmly implanted her feet in the earth, when she is the sole proprietor of nature, her seemingly dead sister reappears, and with her dark and frosty face creates a great sensation among the visible substances of the earth: plants, beasts, and men suffer by her intrusion.

So it is in the spring of the soul. When the dead soul turns its face heavenward, and the icy crust is reached by the fervent heat of a dying Saviour's compassionate blood; when the Sun of righteousness rises higher and higher on the firmament of faith, and when the soul is animated by Jesus Christ himself, it becomes inwrapped in beauty and glory, and will produce smiles of love and hope far superior to those of the most lovely day in May, and precious blossoms of humility, patience, meekness, charity, etc., are visible.

The intruder, however, will repeat his assaults daily, and he is often successful in extinguishing the light of heaven in the soul and establishing eternal darkness. Oh, how grateful I ought to be for that grace which enables me to turn my face Zionward, and to be warmed by that heat which is calculated to produce much fruit to the glory of God.

As the spring advances step by step, even so am I penetrating through the clouds and darkness of the world, through every opposition, and fulfilling my mission according to my strength. In due time I shall reap a glorious harvest.

Language is not yet framed which could paint the sorrow of my soul on entering this institution, neither are the words yet composed which could express the joy of my soul in Jesus Christ this day, or the many and great mercies which he is continually bestowing upon me. No works of mine, however, for I have done nothing good in all my life, but the free and sovereign grace of Christ—grace abounding to the chief of sinners—

grace that seeks and finds the sinner before the sinner seeks or possesses it, has converted my soul from a haunt of reptiles, the brood of hell, into a dwelling-place of God's Holy Spirit.

Never, oh, never, as long as I have a mind to think, will I forget that sweet and precious voice of the blessed Spirit, after a struggle of two bitter years, Peace, be still! There was a great calm immediately, and I could sing:

> Tell it, oh, tell it unto sinners—
> Tell them I am out of hell!

Precious recollections! Oh, how sweet, how soothing, how consoling when the soul seems to be carried off by the influence of darkness or by surrounding circumstances, to be permitted to lean upon Jesus' mighty arm, and walk through the fiery furnace, *seven times heated*, and come out unhurt, purified, and sanctified! Glory! glory! glory be to God for evermore!

LETTERS.*

LETTER NO. 1.

THE Botschafter received the following letter from Sing-Sing prison:

SING-SING PRISON, Dec. 21, 1866.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN BOTSCHAFTER.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: It was my privilege to read in your highly prized journal of this month the urging plea to your countrymen, to assist in the great work which your noble Society is carrying on.

The brotherly love with which that article is written produced an echo in my rejoicing soul, and as I have learned, through the grace of God, to depend on his bounty and

* Translated from the German.

assistance for all things necessary for body and soul, I send you herewith, for Christ and poor sinners' sake, my whole capital, one dollar, the fruit of hard labor.

May it please God to bless this mite, and make it instrumental to the salvation of at least one poor, starving soul, and to the glory of his great and everlasting name. This is the humble desire of one in Christ new-born.

CONVICT.

ANSWER OF THE BOTSCHAFTER.

DEAR BROTHER: Your letter and gift are at hand, and our heart rejoices over them. We publish the former that our readers may share our joy; doubtless they are gladdened by it. But our joy is a mere shadow of that joy which occurred among the angels of heaven when a convict in Sing-Sing prison repented of his sins and was born again in Christ Jesus.

Blessed are we that we have a Saviour who has power to forgive sins, and who can rescue the sinner from the second death, and who will cast no one out, but save all who apply

to him with an humble and contrite heart, and exercise such faith as the Syrophenician woman did.

O dear brother, let us thank and praise Him for his great salvation as long as we live. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation *aright* I will show the salvation of God." Psa. 50:23. And, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," says the apostle of the Lord. When the Lord entered into the publican's house, the penitent sinner spoke in this wise: "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded any one I repay him fourfold." He who has much forgiven will love much. It is true we cannot repay the Lord for his grace and mercy, but the desire to do so will prompt us to do good even to the very lowest of his brethren. He who observed the widow's mite has surely seen that you gave your "all," *the fruit of hard labor*, for the good of the brethren; and he who has promised to reward the giving of a cup of cold water, will bless the thank-offering which you offered in

Sing-Sing prison. "The glory of those who offer thanks is to be permitted to call upon Him in time of need," says the psalmist.

Call on Him then, dear brother, when the tempter reappears. When Satan renews his assaults upon your soul, watch and pray to Jesus. He will hear and save you, and you will, as one sustained in Sing-Sing prison, and as one snatched from the eternal burning, praise him for ever.

May the Lord sanctify your imprisonment to the everlasting liberty of his children. Amen.

Your brother, EDITOR.

Letter No. 2.

A SECOND LETTER FROM SING-SING PRISON.

Sing-Sing, March 22, 1867.

Reverend and Faithful Servant of the Lord: I am greatly rejoiced to know that your noble Society does not despise the mite of the chief of sinners, but accepts it in Jesus' name as a thank-offering of the soul.

My cup is running over in being permitted

to acknowledge the heroic deeds of your Society, and to praise the blessed name of my dearly beloved Saviour with another small gift. I pray you, therefore, to accept my three months' earnings, one dollar, and turn them into a thousand healing drops of God's eternal truth, each strong enough to soften one hardened heart, and create in each of them a hungering and thirsting for that righteousness which is acceptable with God.

P. S. The Tract Society sent suitable books for the writer of this letter to the chaplain at Sing-Sing.

Letter No. 3.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT FROM PRISON

Has been received from that convict who found the Saviour in Sing-Sing, whose heart is burning with love for Jesus and perishing souls. It cost him many weeks of hard labor to save up a dollar, which he might well use for his personal necessity, for he is sick and without an earthly friend; but he denies himself, that

he might contribute his mite to the extension of his Master's kingdom.

Thus he sent *three dollars* just before Christmas, with the following letter:

Reverend Sir: It is very doubtful whether a visit from an unworthy inmate of the living grave will give you pleasure, yet permit me to pen you a few lines. Several months ago I endeavored to give my precious Redeemer a thank-offering, which your Society repaid with books. This is the cause of my long silence. But now I desire most heartily to give him a Christmas present; but see here, dear Jesus, I have only three dollars. If I am free once, and earn better wages, *then shalt thou have more.* In the mean time, I earnestly pray thee not to despise my mite, and to fill the poor and miserable who seek thy face with thy Holy Ghost.

[Note.—Here the writer of these letters was transferred, and he could no longer earn any thing.]

Reader, learn of this poor convict how to offer thanks and practice love. ED.

Letter to Sister M——.

Sing Sing Prison, Sept. 1, 1865.

Dear Sister: From the few words with which you favored me at your last visit here, I conclude that you are yet in the broad way which leadeth to ruin. Matt. 7:13. I think it therefore my duty to set before you the things belonging to your peace—concerning your soul and its future state; for I am convinced that you have never sincerely considered the matter, and therefore do not understand, nor can you comprehend or appreciate them. Although a letter of this nature may not be as agreeable to you as I could wish, yet should it please God to bless these lines, which leave my soul in a sorrowful state about the salvation of *your* immortal soul, and to open your spiritual eyes and understanding, and bring you to self-knowledge and to a knowledge of Him who permits you to live, I would indeed be the happiest of his creatures, and you would in due time be nothing less. Come, then, dearly beloved sister, give me your hand, as you have so often done

in the days of your youth, and go with me into the dying-chamber of a young, self-righteous woman.

Behold the wasted form of a newly-born babe clasped to her bosom. A sad scene, indeed. She offers her weeping husband and broken-hearted friends her icy hand, to depart and to go to a place known only to herself and God. But hark! She is unfolding her very soul: "I am dying, my friends, I am dying. My hour has come, my day of grace is past, my time is ended, and I am not saved. In a few minutes will I be cast into the ever-burning fire. I have lived in sin, rejected Christ, and now he condemns me. Oh, that God would dissolve my soul into nothing! But woe to me, his word proclaims eternal punishment to the wicked. I have always flattered myself with the mercy of God, but with shame confess that for the first time I see that he is not only merciful, but also just, and will punish our iniquities even on our children. Oh, what a horrible thought! Shall the idol of my soul be condemned on my account? Oh, that the fearful God would

have destroyed me in the days of my childhood, before I was capable of drawing my own offspring after me. Awful thought! who can comprehend it? A two-edged sword pierces through my soul. The wrath of God is upon me; infernal spirits stretching forth their arms to receive me." And her spirit fled.

These, dear sister, were the parting words of an unconverted mother, and these are the last feelings of every unconverted sinner. This, unless you repent, will be your last portrait. Do not feel yourself offended at my words, for I mean to lay the things before you just as they are.

You have seen, and I hope felt, the horrible state of a hell-going soul; and should you die to-day or to-morrow, which is not impossible, what would be the condition of your polluted soul? Do you, too, appeal to the mercy of a God whose stubborn and rebellious enemy you have been from your youth up? Do you, too, lean on your own righteousness, saying: "I am no worse than others?" Or do you perhaps think that these

things are not quite as bad as I present them, and if others are getting to heaven, you would surely get there too? Oh, treacherous thought! You may doubt the reality of the above described scene; you may stifle the still small voice within and reject all the means of grace, nevertheless these things remain the same. Death is sure, judgment is sure, but there is no room in heaven for the enemies of God. Hear what Jesus says: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. Do you believe him? You do not; for if you did, you would tremble day and night. But tell me, my dear soul, do you believe that the Bible contains the word of God? I hope you do. But can you call the God of the creation a liar, and accuse him of having spoken what shall not come to pass? As a rational being you cannot do so. When, then, if you acknowledge that the Bible is the word of God, I will presently show you that the God of the universe designs to punish his rebellious and unconverted creatures.

Will you believe the apostle who ascendeth into the third heaven, and who saw things

unutterable? Hear then what St. Paul says: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." 2 Thess. 1:7–10.

Or will you believe the bosom friend of Jesus, who testifies and prophesies mysteriously in his revelation? Hear him: "And they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of indignation; and they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image." That is, self or other perishable objects. Rev. 14:10, 11.

Or would you rather have it from Jesus, the

Judge himself? Then hear him: "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. 13:40–43. Again, hear him pronounce the awful sentence: "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," etc. See Matt. 25.

Should all this not suffice to convince your self-righteous spirit of its undone condition, then take up your Bible, and carefully read the following passages: Luke 13:27, 28; 16:23–31; John 3:1–21. I might point out hundreds of such passages, but if these will not affect your soul, more efforts are useless. If you will not believe Jesus Christ the Son of God, how can you be expected to believe one of your fellow-mortals?

I hope, my dearly-beloved sister, that your eyes may have, by the grace of God, been opened, and that you may see yourself in the true light, just as you are; namely, a miserable, guilty sinner, incapable to save yourself, and unworthy of the least of God's blessings. If you see yourself in this light, then, and not until then, there is some hope for you. Oh, how happy would I be to know that you were about to despair on account of your sins. Oh, if you could only see and feel that if God should withdraw his benevolent, father's hand from you, your body would sink into the grave and your soul into hell.

If you were but determined to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and flee from the enemy to the foot of the cross, and there pour out your guilty soul beneath a dying Saviour, it would be the wisest thing you ever did. Above all things, know that reconciliation is the thing needful to procure timely and eternal happiness. I pray you, therefore, in the name of the almighty God, the highest, best, and noblest of beings; in the name of your Creator, Benefactor, and Preserver, in

whom you live, move, and have your being, and before whose tribunal you must shortly appear, to give an account of all the deeds, words, and thoughts of your sinful life, and to accept of a sentence accordingly. Yes, in his great name I pray you to be reconciled to him. In the name of him who feeds the fowls of the air and who counts the hairs of your head, delay not, but turn to him. In the name of him who justly styles himself *Love*, and who has arranged the heaven of heavens with such a glory for his creatures as the heart of man cannot conceive, I pray you look to him. In the name of his awful majesty and justice, who has made the dungeons of hell a prison for his enemies, and who holds the mighty fetters of darkness in his hand, where thousands of our race are now in vain asking for a drop of cold water to cool their parched tongues, and which will be your lot if you turn not to God. Oh, seek his mercy.

Yes, dear soul, in the name of Jesus and for his sake, the Friend of sinners who took our nature upon him and who proclaimed peace and salvation for you. He prayed and

wept, sweat great drops of blood, suffered, died, and arose again, ascended to heaven, and is now interceding for you at the great white throne, and who is to-day stretching forth his arms towards you, entreating you in a most affectionate manner to come to him. Oh, hear him how he pleads with you: "Come to me, and you shall for ever sit with me on my throne." "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, how sweet, how precious is such language!

He promises pardon for the guilty, liberty for the captive and slave, righteousness and redemption for sinners, sanctification for the wicked, rest for the weary, and consolation for the mourning; further, all his riches for the poor, the naked, the blind, the miserable, the forsaken, the outcast and lost.

All this, my dear soul, he promises to you and me, without money and without price; and we are permitted, no, we are invited with godly sympathy and love, as he calls us with agonizing sorrow: "Sinner, why will you die?" Will you listen, will you open your heart?

Oh, my dear soul, I have heard and obeyed his call, and received that peace and joy in the Holy Ghost which is not known to the world and its admirers. Yes, I have received a salvation which I would not give for ten thousand worlds like this. Wake up, then, my dear soul. The Lord is here, and graciously waits to fill you with heavenly blessings. The pearl of great price is awaiting you. Oh, be no longer joined to your idols. Come out of your sins. Gracious God in heaven, wilt thou have compassion upon this dead soul? O Father, lead her to the Fountain of life and love, cleanse and revive her in the blood of the Lamb. Open her eyes, O God, and show her *herself* and *thyself;* show her the end of her pilgrimage, death, judgment, and eternity, and then reveal to her thy goodness and loving-kindness, and point her to the wounds of Jesus as the only remedy for her disease. Oh, let thy Spirit dwell within her, and induce her to flee from the wrath to come. Enable her to bring up those young souls which thou hast given her in the way they should go, that they may finally

inherit thy kingdom. O God, what a sad scene—a family of many members running headlong into perdition! How sad, oh, how sad!

Dear sister, I have labored hard to reach the depth of your soul, yet I fear that you will again turn a deaf ear to my tender, but earnest entreaties, and remain careless about your eternal welfare, and say: Depart from me for this time; when I have a more convenient season I will attend to these things; but remember that God said: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," and that the longer you reject him, the harder your heart will be, and the more hopeless will become your condition. Remember also how he dealt with me. He beckoned to me continually from my youth up; he laid me on a—seemingly—death-bed; he removed the idols from my soul at different times, in order to attract my attention; but I would not give heed to his many calls until he cast me into prison to bewail my folly.

If you cannot be persuaded to become wise; if it is your heart's desire to run with open

eyes and outstretched arms, with children and children's children, into the gulf of eternal damnation, then pardon me for my intrusion, but remember that as a Christian it was my solemn duty to do so. Remember also, when you suffer pain in the unquenchable flames, that you have been warned in time by an affectionate brother. Remember that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of our intrusted talents, and there permit me to answer in the presence of God, angels, and men to the inquiry of the Judge about *my* talents: Lord, thou knowest that I have sought my duty towards these unhappy souls. Thou knowest, O Lord, that I besought them with tears to come to Jesus, and be reconciled to their Creator. Thou knowest that I pleaded for them at the throne of grace in great agony of soul from the day of my second birth until the coming of the Lord.

Thus, dear sister, I commit your case into the hands of my blessed Saviour, who has snatched me as a brand from the burning, and established my goings in high places.

May the good Lord bless these lines, and answer my prayers in your speedy conversion, that we may finally meet in heaven, and rejoice in the glory of the Lamb for ever and ever, in whose blood my filthy robes have been washed, and in whose loving-kindness I am now swimming as in a boundless sea of happiness and joy. Oh, how delightful are the ways of the Lord! How sorry I am for not having attended to these things in my youth, and instead of being a poor, miserable convict, a mighty warrior in the cause of Christ.

Once more, dear sister, I pray you to consider these things. Oh, come and cast yourself before the Lord Jesus; pour out your soul before him; plead his merits; give a portion of your time to him; think of him and all he has done and is ready to do for you. Oh, surrender to him now that you may be eternally blessed.

Thus pleads your loving brother,

J. M——.

How to become a Christian.*

In order to become a Christian, you must *know yourself.* You must know that you are animated by the evil spirit, whose chief qualities are malice, hatred, pride, stubbornness, ignorance, unbelief, selfishness, and other hell-deserving vices. You must know that your heart is a perfect volcano of iniquity, and by the instrumentality of an unbridled tongue you are spewing out from the abundance of your heart fire and brimstone, profanity and blasphemy, which are very apt to find a lodging in the souls of those about you—men perhaps who have resolved to turn from their evil ways and commence a new life. Thus you are continually destroying the works of an ever-striving and pleading Spirit, and dragging your friends and neighbors unconsciously along with you into the bottomless pit. This is the case, more or less, with every unconverted sinner. I care not how polished and refined your manners may be,

* Extract from a letter to an inquirer.

unregenerated you cannot do any thing acceptable to God. "The carnal heart is enmity against God." Consequently you are doing the works of darkness. It is as hard for you to do any thing pleasing to God as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. This is the unconverted sinner.

Now to become what the Bible calls a child of God, the first step necessary is to look to Jesus for help. The next step is to lay down the banner of Satan, drop the armor of darkness, cast away the weapon of rebellion—to lay down your pride and selfishness, lay it all at the foot of the cross. Yea, lay your entire being, soul and body, and whatever you hold dear, at Jesus' feet. This done, the door of your heart is open to the waiting Spirit, who will surely enter in at your surrender, and fill your soul with peace and joy and love, such as human language is inadequate to express. Come, then, my dearest friend, and make the experiment. It is a speculation which cannot fail. Millions have tried it, and every one who has cast himself wholly on Jesus came out of the furnace of regeneration in perfect

safety, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is true, your losses are great, but your gains are much greater, and exceedingly sweet. Yes, you will lose all your hell-deserving vices, by which you are now fettered to Satan. You will lose all those evil and contemptible habits and ways which will, if persisted in, induce you one day to curse your fellow-men for not giving you warning in time—curse the day of your birth, and curse Him who styles himself "Love," and who permits you to live, for not destroying you before you were capable of committing sin. Yes, you will curse your very existence when it is too late to bewail the follies of a sinful life.

Repent, and the Spirit of God will take possession of your soul. He will subdue the evil one, and plant the fruit-bearing tree of life within you, and fill your soul with a dying Saviour's love, and constrain you to glorify his holy name in every act, word, and thought. All this the Holy Ghost will accomplish, provided you will open your heart to him. Remember that he cannot enter into your heart so long as you bar it against him with your

pride and unbelief; and unless he enter in your heart will not be changed; and "unless you are born again you cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. Happiness, for which every soul is panting, originates in a change of heart. A change of heart originates in faith and humility, and these originate in self-knowledge. "Know thyself, O man," is the language of a heathen philosopher, and know that there is no good thing within you, is the teaching of the Bible and experience.

When I studied myself—looked into myself, and compared myself with the Saviour, I saw how vile a thing, how great a monster I was, and I became as humble as a little child. The hand of mercy was held out to me; I embraced it; I began to love Jesus, and I was a Christian, and became a most joyous and happy man.

A mere passing thought or desire to become a Christian is not sufficient. The unhappy man desires to become happy; the criminal desires to be set free; the dying desires to enter heaven. But what avail these desires?

Go and ask any or all of the fifteen hundred inmates of this institution if they did not wish to become Christians, and they will, without exception, answer yes. But why are they not Christians? Have they not the Bible, the sure guide to heaven, at their command? Have they not the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them in a most powerful manner from Sabbath to Sabbath? Have they not a weekly prayer-meeting? Have they not a great number of religious books, written by godly men and women, calculated to lift the mind above sin and the world, and bind it to the Creator? Have they not all the means of grace which they can reasonably ask for? Have they not ample time for thought and reflection? and have they not experienced that the way of the transgressor is hard? Know they not that the wages of sin are bitter sorrow? Is not the Holy Spirit striving with them individually? Is not Jesus knocking at the doors of their hearts, begging to be admitted? Have they not all the advantages ever held out by a merciful Providence to any community? and yet we cannot

find one hundred of the entire number decided Christians. Why is this? They desire to be Christians and honest men and women, yet they do not choose to be such. "They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Their hearts are evil and have a downward tendency.

It is true, we cannot contribute to our salvation, but we must choose it. We must accept it on the Saviour's own terms—free, without money, and without price. We must seek it; we must make efforts to obtain it. It is not sufficient for a hungry man *to desire* to have something to eat. No, he must procure food, and then eat it, digest it, and his stomach will be satisfied. So it is with the soul. It desires something more than it possesses. It is craving after happiness which the world cannot furnish, which must be sought in Jesus Christ. In him alone it is found. He is the life of the soul. Without him the soul is never satisfied, never happy.

I had a shopmate some time ago who frequently told me that he sincerely longed to be a Christian, but that he would patiently

wait till God saw fit to make him one. In the mean time he went about his daily business, as careless about spiritual things as a dumb beast. He would do what he thought was right—rejoice with the joyous, weep with the weeping, swear with the profane, and do as others do. He was worldly-minded, and considered Christian exertion as superfluous.

But you say you were never a very great sinner, and consequently there is hope for pardon. Tell me, my good friend, have you sinned less than St. Paul, whose only crime consisted in doing what the law of his fathers approved, and who calls himself "the chief of sinners?" Have you sinned less than St. Peter, who bitterly lamented his folly? Have you sinned less than Lot's wife, who suffered the penalty of death for casting a sorrowful glance upon the vanities of Sodom, from which she had just departed? What was the nature of her crime? I answer, Unbelief and worldly-mindedness. She, with a carnal heart, loved the riches of the world better than the commandments of God. Are you not guilty of the same transgressions? Jesus says, "He

that believeth not on the Son of God is condemned already." And St. James remarks, "Whosoever offends in one point is guilty of the whole law." Have we, you and I, not transgressed each and every one of God's holy commandments? Let us see. Let us resort to our guide, and look at the table of stone laid down in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. Here Jehovah speaks thus:

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."

Here he demands supreme homage, of which we have robbed him, day after day. In our unconverted state we worship any thing else rather than God, for our hearts are enmity against him. Yes, we have worshiped our friends, ourselves, our property, and other perishing objects, and defrauded God of his just dues.

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

"And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

We bow ourselves down to that which we worship, to that which commands our affections, which occupies our thoughts most; and that which we love best is our god, be it whatever it may. If we are the offspring of wicked parents the curse of God is upon us, and no one can remove it except Jesus Christ.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Few persons ever lived on this earth that are not guilty of this transgression. It is committed in anger, in carelessness, and in formal prayer, and in either case it is violating the law of God.

"Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.

"Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

"But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it."

Have you always observed every point in this commandment? I never have. I confess that I have violated every holy Sabbath-day the Lord has permitted me to see.

"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Instinct induces the senseless brute to comply with this command, while you and I have given offence to those who tenderly loved and nourished us.

"Thou shalt not kill."

Jesus Christ says in reference to this commandment: "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." It is even so. Spiritually, we kill our enemies. We don't love them; they have no place in our affections; they are dead to us.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The Saviour defines this: He that lusted after a woman committed adultery in his heart.

"Thou shalt not steal."

He only is faultless in this point who ceases to rob God.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

False witness is given by every one who speaks a falsehood, either from carelessness, from misunderstanding, or from an evil heart. Our neighbor is he or she with whom we come in contact.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's."

He that desires what is not his own, what he has no right to, is committing theft in his heart, as well as he who hates his fellow-man is committing murder.

Thus, my dear friend, we have seen that you and I have broken every point of a holy and just law—a law which cannot and will not be changed, for God is unchangeable. What then is the consequence? "The soul that sinneth it shall die," is the language of the Lawgiver. Eternal damnation is our just portion. Yes, we are offending our Creator and Benefactor in almost every act, word, and thought, and we are sinners of the blackest type, just such as Jesus came to save. Will you let him save you? Will you call on him and implore his forgiveness? Will you cease to do evil and learn to do well? Will you come out of nature's darkness into marvelous light, and be a happy, ever-rejoicing Christian? Would you be rich? then come and accumulate treasures in heaven. Would you be a noble man? then open your heart to God, and let Christ's constraining love be the actuating spring of all your doings. Would

you be a great man? then let the great and everlasting Spirit inspire you.

I am sure you desire to be a happy man, and I long to see you as such, and would gladly do any thing in my power to make you such. But this is a matter between you and your God. Without him there is no happiness. I am speaking from experience. I have sought happiness for many long years, but failed until I sought and found it in God, through Jesus Christ; and not for all the treasures of the world would I give up this fountain of happiness, from which I draw so abundantly day after day.

Do not listen to the enemy and his many advocates, who would have you go on in your present course until you finally fall a victim to his cruelty; nor listen to those flattering ministers of Satan who would persuade you that you have nothing to do but patiently await God's own time to save you. This is a sad mistake. God will not save you in *his own time*, but he will save you in *your own time*. He will save you *to-day* if you are in earnest about it. If you will only surrender your

heart, your affections, your inner man to him, he will enter in immediately with his heavenly hosts, and cast out the forces of the enemy, and will induce you to love him, and you *are a Christian.*

As to *nothing to do*, I must say that the Bible and experience teach differently. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 7:14. And in another place the Saviour says: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." It is evident from this that he who puts his hands into his lap, awaiting an outward miracle to transfer him to heaven, will be disappointed; and he who gratifies his own pleasures, and lives after the lusts of his own heart, will fail to find the strait gate and narrow way which lead through happiness into blessedness. Experience tells us that the way to heaven is grave. Yes, it takes all I can do to keep in this narrow way, and with all my energy I progress but slowly. Yet, for all this, I find the Christian's life an exceedingly sweet life; for every new step I take I receive a

measure of blessing which makes me intensely happy for a considerable time.

But there is another point which I cannot pass unnoticed, namely: the Christian community dwells largely upon death-bed conversions, so much so, that numbers of unconverted sinners really believe it time enough to repent when they come to die. They mean to cease from doing evil when their lives are finished and they can commit sin no longer. They mean to learn to do good when they get to heaven. They mean to offend God as long as he allows them to live on earth and then be transformed into pure and spotless saints. Oh, awful infatuation! Oh, how these spirits must curse their deceitful friends who have unknowingly sealed their damnation.

We hear much of death-bed conversions, and conversions in the eleventh hour, but could their advocates look beyond the veil and behold their supposed pearls among the outcasts, they would doubtless observe silence on this point and hide their weakness, and many a slumberer would think of his soul's welfare before it is too late.

We do not doubt death-bed conversions for we know that all thing are possible with God, but at the same time we believe that nine-tenths reported have no foundation. They are produced by fear of death, judgment and hell—by physical weakness and by the ceaseless persuasions and entreaties of their surrounding and lamenting friends, who desire to do them good, if possible to lift them up into heaven. They are perchance fortunate enough to extract a word from the sufferer's lips, who generally understands their disease and frequently heals them by a few pleasing words—Love, in spite of its strength and durability, has a great many weak points—especially in the sick chamber—which generates hope without the slightest foundation; and we believe our friends safely lodged in Jesus' arms, when they have not trodden the narrow way, nor stormed the gates of heaven. We are weak, imaginative creatures, and are very apt to hope too much where *our* and *our friend's* interest is concerned, and this is downright selfishness.

What pleasure is it to a dying man to look

with horror over a life of sin and folly with but a faint hope for the life to come? Can he die happy in the assurance of meeting those, to whom he proved a bitter enemy during his stay on earth? His sins may be forgiven, Jesus may stand by him, but the enemy will repeat his assaults until the last moment, for he had possession of him and means to keep him for ever, and the poor sinner *cannot* really die happy. This *he* only can do, who according to the divine command, "gave his heart to God in his youth," who became a Christian, who walked in the narrow way, who ceased to do evil, learned to do good, learned to oppose Satan, who made Jesus his friend and God the supreme object of his affection.

The King of Love.

THE English boast of a noble queen; the Prussians of a wise Bismarck; the French of a great emperor; the Romanist of a holy father in Rome, and a blessed virgin in heaven. But what is the substance of my joy and admiration? It is the friend that sticketh closer than a brother. It is the *King of kings* and *Lord of lords.* I know him well. I have spent an hour with him on the evening when he washed the feet of his disciples. I have seen his agony in Gethsemane. I have tarried with him on Golgotha, where he prayed for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

I have investigated the change which his appearance produced in society. I saw the fruits of his life, and have experienced the power of his glorious gospel, and conclude that Jesus Christ must be the *King of Love.*

I sought him with the faith of the pleading woman of Canaan, and a publican's spirit. I found him and laid myself at his feet, looking up into his face, and saw the unspeakable beauty, the exquisite sweetness, felt and experienced accordingly and most abundantly the loving kindness of this *King of Love.*

Yes, he is *love!* St. John, his only bosom friend, tells us in the first chapter of his gospel, that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That is, Jesus Christ was with God in the beginning of the creation, and he himself was God. Him I recognize as the God of love. Love, long suffering, and patient; slow to anger.

Yes, he permits his creatures to do as they please. He allows the scoffer, the profane, the blasphemer, the drunkard, the licentious, the thief, the murderer, the seducer, the gambler and every one else to follow the inclinations of their own evil hearts. His sun shines upon the just and the unjust, and his rain descends upon the good and the evil, and all his blessings are equally divided. All

creatures testify that *God is love!* The birds in the air sing forth his praises. The beasts of the field rejoice in him who made them. The mountains, rivers, and seas acknowledge his greatness. The insignificant insect praises its sustainer. The little brook murmurs *love.* Every sprig of grass, plant, and tree, point to him whose name is *love.* Every grain of dust in the streets, and sand on the ocean's shore, gives evidence that God is love.

His love is evident and visible in all things which human eye can measure and intellect comprehend. The smiles of the returning sun in the east are love as pure as the smiles of a happy infant on its mother's breast. The moon giving light in dark homes, is a welcome messenger of *love.* The numberless stars are rays of *love.* Thus we see that all things are emblems of his *love.*

But in nothing is the power of his love so greatly and forcibly manifested as in the conversion of the human soul. The roaring lion is transformed into an angel of mercy. Yes, the icebergs of the unconverted heart, when touched by the fervent heat of a dying Sa-

viour's cleansing blood become wells of living water, springing forth in every direction, nourishing and cherishing his little lambs, turning sinners into saints, and spirits of darkness into spirits of light. This well becomes a mighty stream springing up into eternal life, gladdening the heart of him whom I know to be the *King of Love.*

He is a *most wonderful being.* He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin who was raised in the temple for the service of God. His name was sent from heaven. Wise men from distant lands were guided by his star to his birthplace and worshiped him, while his earthly sovereign sought to kill him. When but twelve years old, he disputed with the doctors of divinity to the astonishment of all around. Before he made himself known to the world, he was baptized by the greatest of prophets, in the presence of a great multitude of people while God's spirit descended upon him, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This same spirit carried him out into the wilderness where he fasted forty days. There he was

visited by Satan, who meant to make an instrument of his own of him. He was greatly tempted but sinned not. He began to preach, and what glorious language did he utter, especially in his Sermon on the Mount; hear him: "Blessed are the poor, the mourning, the meek, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake," theirs, says he, "is the kingdom of heaven." He exhorts to almsgiving, to pray, to fast, to serve God, to enter in at the strait gate, to love God and man, even our enemies. He went about doing good. He relieved the weary and heavy laden, the distressed and disconsolate from their grief, and made them glad. He preached his everlasting gospel by the seashore, on the mountain top, by the highway and byway, in market-places, in synagogues, and wherever he could find sinners. He converted the publican, and persuaded the ruler of his sinful nature, and urged repentance as a necessity for eternal life. He rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees, the high-priest, the Jews and

Gentiles for their unbelief and hypocrisy. He healed all manner of diseases, such as were never before healed, he restored the withered hand, cured the palsy, relieved the sufferer from a thirty-eight years' pain, he stopped a twelve years issue of blood, cleansed the leper, straightened a crooked woman, healed the dropsy, and cured all manner of disease known to a suffering race. He created a great sensation among the people. He was poor, dwelt with sinners, yet angels ministered unto him. He fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and a few fishes. Again, he fed four thousand men, women and children, with seven loaves of bread and two small fishes. He walked on the sea, rebuked the wind and waves, and there was a calm. He entered as king into Jerusalem and wept over it. He purged the temple and recognized the widow's offering. He foretold his death, resurrection, and ascension. He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and the world, the persecution of the righteous, and the dispersion of the Jews, his second coming, and many other wonderful things. He turned water

into wine, he cursed a fig-tree and it withered, and he caught fish containing money. He talked with a sinful woman at Jacob's well, and imparted to her the water of life; he forgave the woman taken in adultery, he cursed the centurion's servant at a distance, he told a sorrowing mother to *weep not*, and raised her only consolation—a dear son—from the dead, and gave him back to her. He wept with Mary and Martha at their brother's grave and awoke him from his—supposed—eternal slumber. He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead; he cured the lunatic, cleared the soul from the possessions of hell, drove out devils, opened the ear of the deaf, loosened the tongue of the dumb, and gave sight to the blind; he associated with sinners of the blackest type, and claimed to be their friend; he loved little children and promised them the kingdom of heaven; he had compassion on the multitudes and blessed them *en masse*. Some called him God, some man, and others devil. He wept with the weeping, and rejoiced with the joyous; he gave his apostles power to cast out infernal spirits, and imparted his own

spirit unto them; he expounded the law of the old dispensation and laid down a new code; he is the lawgiver and the fulfiller of the same; he calls himself the truth, the life, and the way to heaven; he is the bread of life, yet was often hungry and weary; he is the good shepherd, and knows every sheep of the flock by name; he is the vine, without him there is no eternal life; he is the light of the world, it shines brilliantly in dark places; he is the door, through him we must enter into rest. He says: "Prayers in my name shall be answered." But he demands love and obedience; he promises his comforter, and leaves his peace to all who earnestly ask for it; he prays for his little ones that they might be kept in his truth, and be glorified with all believers in heaven. He is the chief of ten thousand, the one altogether lovely, and is called the *Prince of Peace*, *The Mighty God*, *The Everlasting Father*, yet permits a sinful woman to wash his sacred feet with her tears, wipe them with her hair and anoint them with ointment. He says: "Whosoever will do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother, and

sister, and mother." Matt. 12:50. He forgave sins freely and cured every malady of body and soul. It is said of him: "And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole." Mark 6:56.

This is but a shadow of His character, for words cannot fathom the depth of eternal love. But if the *man Jesus* cannot be comprehended by human wisdom, what shall we say of *God Jesus*, who holds ten thousand of such worlds as ours in existence, and who holds the keys of heaven and hell, and of every individual heart in his hand? Can a man refuse to acknowledge his authority and bow before him? Who can reject so loving a being?

He was the greatest teacher the world ever beheld, yet we have no record that he ever went to school or obtained wisdom from man. He was a physician before whom every ailment, small and great, pertaining to body

and soul, disappeared. He never studied medicine, never went to college, yet never lost a case in his practice. He was a law-maker, such as never before or after him had his equal. He spoke as man never spoke. He was a perfect example of humility and meekness. In him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In him I find the substance of my joy. He is the delight of my soul and the sole object of my admiration. Truly, he is the *King of Love.*

Prayer the Key of Heaven.

PRAYER is the key of heaven. It unlocks the great heart of God. It unbars the gates of the celestial city, and brings trains of mercies to the petitioner. It was employed by all the patriarchs, prophets, and saints in all ages, and whosoever made use of it had access to the unsearchable riches of heaven. With it the prophet Elijah closed the heavens, and no rain fell for three and a half years, after which he opened them again with the same power, and rain fell in abundance.

By prayer Hezekiah added fifteen years to his life, and brought the sun back ten degrees, after it had gone down. Isa. 38.

By prayer Joshua arrested the sun and moon at noonday, and the sun hastened not to go down for a whole day, saying: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Josh. 10:12.

We read in Exodus 32:10, of the wrath which an angry God has prepared for an ungrateful people, which he intended to sweep from the face of the earth. But behold, an intercessor appears. Moses, the faithful servant of God, by earnest entreaty arrested the uplifted arm of fiery vengeance against Israel. "Let me alone, let me alone, said the frowning avenger, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make thee a great nation." But in vain; Moses continued in prayer and God heard and granted his request.

Thus we see that there is at least one power—the sword of prayer—by which the creature may influence the Creator. It is a power which a child in early years and the hoary head of age can wield. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because there was not moral force enough in them to sustain them. The world was destroyed once because praying and righteous souls were scarce. This globe is covered with polluted Sodoms; yet for the sake of the few righteous in them they are spared.

Mary, the queen of Scotland, said she feared the prayers of John Knox more than all the armies of Europe. How mighty then is a praying man!

Prayers with tears are most effectual with God. The Holy Scriptures abound in examples to prove their power. They open the fountain of love and prepare a way by which the soul has access to the throne of grace. They open heaven and draw down trains of blessings which make the petitioner rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Mary Magdalen asked the Lord for the forgiveness of her great and numerous sins, Luke 7:38; washing his sacred feet with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head; kissing his feet unceasingly, and anointing them with ointment. And he said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." His love, which passeth understanding, found an echo in her soul. She loved him tenderly, and the result was, the forgiveness of all her sins.

St. Paul writes of our Saviour: "Who, in the days of his flesh, with strong cries and tears,

offering up prayers and supplications, and was heard in that he feared." Heb. 5:7. Millions of prayers, however, are never heard nor answered, simply because the petitioner is not in earnest. He who clings with both hands to one or more cherished idols, while he casts but one fainting glance on Him whom he addresses, is guilty of downright mockery. Says the Holy One, "He who turned away his ear from the learning of the law, his prayer shall be an abomination." Prov. 28:9 Again, "I will turn my eyes from you and will not hear you; when you stretch forth your hands I will turn away my eyes from you; and when you multiply prayers I will *not* hear." Isa. 1:15.

Humble and faithful prayer if persevered in and accompanied by works meet for repentance, will break the chains of hell and enable the captive to flee from the wrath of an angry God. "Ask," said Jesus; "yea, every one that asketh receiveth, and he who seeks shall find." Matt. 7:8.

The desire of the sinner to escape punishment is the work of God's eternal love, who

would have no one to perish, but bring all to a knowledge of God as it is in Jesus Christ. But the command is: "When you shall stand and pray, forgive, if you have aught against any man." Mark 11:25. "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. 5:24.

Here we plainly see that however humble, faithful, and fervent our prayers may be, if we hate or dislike the least of God's rational beings, he will not even listen to us. In order to carry this point we must not only forgive our enemies, but must go to them and show a disposition of reconciliation, beg their pardon for the (supposed) wrong inflicted on them, show them the spirit of brotherly love, pray for them and do good to them. Thus by imitating his goodness, most adverse to our nature, we exercise a heroic spirit, which conquers the devil and is well pleasing to God. But if we have no enemies to forgive we have friends and neighbors with whims, weaknesses, faults of character, disagreeable manners and the like, which if we bear patiently,

enables us to fulfil one of Christ's noblest commandments: namely, "Bear ye one another's burdens."

Again, "Deal thy bread to the hungry and bring the needy and homeless into thy house; when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thine own flesh." Isa. 58:7. A fruitless tree is cut down and cast into the fire. But many a one may say, it is not in my power to give alms, to fast, to wait upon the sick, or to perform any such good works, hence the means here given to make prayer efficacious is for me not practicable. In this case it must be remembered that besides these so-called exterior good works, there are others; interior good works which are calculated to make prayer powerful with God. Of these I will mention but one, viz., the denial of the will in order to do God's holy will in the most perfect manner. If we would have God to delight in us, we must strive to delight in him. Says the Psalmist, "Delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart." Psa. 37:4. He only who is doing the Lord's will with a

cheerful heart delights in him. His petition according to David, shall be granted. If we wish to obtain what we ask and what he promised, we must comply with his request: "Love one another, and increase in love to me." This can be accomplished only by making him our constant companion, which is done by prayer alone. If we pray we are in him; that is, if we think of him, we pray. If we speak to him we pray. If we look upon him we pray. Whenever our hearts go out after him—after the things which are good and acceptable before God—we pray. Powerful is he with God who lends a ready ear and a willing heart to his voice, for he is good and gracious to such an extent, that he not only grants our prayers, but anticipates them. "And it shall come to pass, before they call I will answer." Isa. 65:24. Would to God that all men everywhere would understand and practice this sublime habit of prayer.

One reason why our prayers remain unheard and unanswered is, want of faith, want of confidence. Experience teaches us that he who wavers and has no confidence in God,

prays in vain. If we wish our prayers to be heard, they must be offered in faith. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24. And as he is a true and faithful God, he cannot break his promise. What did the great physician say to his patients? According to your faith be it done unto you. They believed and were healed.

If asked, he gives more than asked for. The thief on the cross only asked to be remembered, and was told that paradise should be his portion that day. Luke 23:43. Solomon asked for wisdom, and received without measure, besides, immense riches and glory. King Hezekiah prayed for the restoration of his health. It was answered with fifteen additional years to his life and a miraculous victory over his enemies. Isa. 38.

Thus we see how lavishly the Lord bestows his gifts upon all who ask. His sun and his countenance smile upon all.

Who will dare to deny after these considerations, that God is for us the best, the kindest, loving, and most liberal Father! Jesus

Christ, who is God, acquainted his disciples and followers with their Creator by the meekest, sweetest, and most amiable name, "Father." Hear him: "Thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father who art in heaven," Matt. 6:9. Again, "Pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee." Why is this? It is because his name is above all others, and he is pleased to be called "Father."

We have received the adoption of sons, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father," just as little children stretch forth their hands after their father, crying, "Papa," an expression of the most tender love and affection, and of the most unbounded confidence. You cannot fathom the depth of your earthly father's heart and affections, much less can you sound the bottomless ocean of eternal love.

The prodigal son well knew how guilty he was in the sight of his father, yet remembering the boundless love of a parent's heart, he returned. How could he go to a father whom he had so grievously offended? What hope could he have to be received into the

family again? "Oh," said he, "he is my father, and my father's heart and love have not died away. I will go to him without fear." And he succeeded.

Importunate Prayer.

Jesus Christ has, it is true, promised to give us every thing we ask the Father through him; but he has not promised to answer immediately. Experienced Christians and the Bible assign many reasons for which he often defers granting our petitions. 1st. That he may the better try our confidence in him. 2d. That we the more long for his gifts, and hold them in higher esteem. He defers the grants in order to increase our desire and appreciation for them. 3d. That he may keep us near him, and give us occasion to pray with greater fervor and vehemence. He delays in order to let us feel our weakness more deeply, and give us a due regard for his goodness. He restrains his promises, that we may exercise ourselves more thoroughly in the school of affliction, and come out of the fiery furnace of tribulation pure

and holy, well supplied with his love and grace. The constant expectation of his Spirit is a good spur to inflame us, and bind us more closely to God. If we are patient, resigned, and determined in prayer until he is pleased to answer us, we will not be disappointed in our hopes and expectations, and receive what we ask of him, providing our prayers are not selfish, and that they tend to the glorification of his holy name. Jesus assures us of it: "Ask, and it *shall* be given you; seek, and ye *shall* find; knock, and it *shall* be opened unto you." Luke 11:9. Ask the millions of believers now living if they ever prayed in vain. The answer will be: "No; God cannot slight our petitions. His nature compels him to comply with our desires in due time, if they are of the right kind." Abraham and Sarah were very dear to the Lord, yet they had to pray for long and weary years before they beheld the promised seed. They fainted not. His word was sure. A son was given them. How did Jesus treat the woman of Canaan who came out of those coasts crying out and said to him: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou

Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil?" Matt. 15:22. And what does the Lord reply? He does not even as much as look at her, nor does he give her any answer. Still she continues to pray with great humility, "Lord, help me!" She had made her daughter's case her own, as a good mother would naturally do. But the Lord seemed not to hear her until his disciples, weary and annoyed with her supplications, came and besought him, saying: "Send her away, for she crieth after us." He answered her: "It is not good to take the bread from the children and cast it to the dogs." Even in this conduct of our Lord we discover his unusual kindness and condescension, which he would deign to show to the greatest sinner. He did not, by his manner of acting, discourage the woman in the least. She retained all hopes of being heard. Jesus had his wise design in treating her thus. He knew her faith and confidence, and desired to magnify it; and as she pleads on, it shines forth more brilliantly. "Truth, Lord," she answered, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall

from the masters' table." Boundless humility! Jesus, being conquered by her humility and faith, answered: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole that very hour." Had her faith been weak, she would not have thus pleaded, and would have failed in her object. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, was treated likewise. She prayed to God seventeen years before the fruits of her petitions were visible—the conversion of her only son, who became a mighty pillar in the church of Christ. Had she become tired of praying and weeping before the Lord, in all probability the name of Augustine would not now shine with such lustre in the history of the church.

"What," says St. Augustine, "is more excellent, more profitable, more sublime, and sweeter to the soul than prayer?" And I add, what is more pleasing to a love-burning soul than to minister to those in want? Behold the angel of mercy, who carries a large heart well stored with divine consolations for the disconsolate and distressed, and a basket well

packed with precious food and materials to the hungry and needy. Is she not a direct messenger from heaven, sent by the Father of love?

Ah, could my fellow-creatures but see and feel the reality of *this* saying of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and comply with it, how many more prayers would be answered; how much more happiness would be experienced on the part of the giver as well as the receiver; how much more would God be praised; how much more his name glorified, his kingdom extended, and souls saved!

The way to the celestial city is wearisome. Says one: "I confess that it cost me innumerable sufferings, for the road to virtue is narrow and hard, but by perseverance, faithful prayer has become my life, my nurse, my mistress, my refreshment, my consolation, my rest, my fortune, my all in all. Prayer has nourished me as a tender mother nourishes her infant with milk."

The Lord not only freely gives what we ask, but he sends trains of blessings to those

who really desire them from their inmost souls. Join the soul to the desire for them, by making use of the means here laid down to acquire them, and rest assured that God will deal with you in a most liberal manner, as is peculiar to his parental heart. Says one: "Since I have given myself up to holy prayer, I am quite a different creature." This is the testimony of every praying soul. Says another: "Faithful prayer, considered in its nature or quality, is a familiar conversation and union with God." Considered in its efficacy, it is the preservation of the world, a companion on journeys, a bridge over the high waters of temptation, a bulwark against the enemy, the nourishment of the soul. It is the anticipation of future joy, a perpetual occupation, the source of virtue, the channel of all graces, the medicine of the heart and all spiritual ailment, the ground-pillar of Christian hope. Prayer is a mirror to show the progress in the spiritual life; it is the thermometer of the soul, a delight to our guardian-angel, the declaration of the disposition of the heart, a ladder to God, the sweet-

ness of life, the protection of the soul, a torment to Satan, an acceptable homage to God. Prayer is the preserver of spiritual health. It is the antidote of hatred, the best rule in making just laws, the best means to govern aright. It is a standard in war and a stronghold in peace. It is the source of all true joy, and the best physician for the dying. Faithful prayer produces a transfiguration of the soul. It is the ark of the covenant, the wonder-working rod of Moses, a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. It is the only key of heaven, the only language understood there, and the only interpreter of holy writ.

We know from experience that the Christian's life is a life of joy, peace, happiness, and pleasure far beyond the measurement of human language. But in order to experience it as such, it also becomes a life of continual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

It is true we cannot continually stand and pray, yet the enemy has nothing else to do but to lay baits for us; and what wonder is it

when the just man falls seven times a day? If we do not pray unceasingly, we are very apt to fall seven thousand times. But how is this to be done?

This question was once brought before a council of learned divines, who, after due consideration, pronounced it a divine mystery which human wisdom cannot comprehend. A young girl who was present, and hearing the verdict of the learned jury, begged permission to tell her experience concerning the question. It was refused. She was looked upon as a puny, insignificant creature. She insisted upon telling how she prayed without ceasing. She gained her point, and commenced, saying very humbly: "I am a poor servant-girl in Mr. ——'s family, but I love Jesus dearly, and I am rich in grace. I enjoy life in all its beauty and loveliness while looking to Jesus. As I awake in the morning, I look to him, saying, 'Come, dearest Saviour, go with me to-day, that I stray not from the path of virtue.' I raise myself up, saying, 'Father, lift thy countenance upon me to-day, that I may not walk in darkness.'

I clothe myself, saying, 'Lord, clothe me with Christ's righteousness, that at his coming he may not find me in filthy rags or totally naked.' I fall upon my knees and open my heart and mouth in prayer to God, and he is pleased to fill me with treasures unspeakable. I descend the stairs, saying, 'Lord, as my body goes downward, let my soul go up to be for ever with thee.' I enter the kitchen, with, 'Come, blessed Spirit, enter into my soul and cast out the demon.' On building a fire in the stove, I say from my inmost soul, 'Kindle a flame of sacred love within me, that my heart may burn for thy glory, and that my superiors might be warmed by its fervent heat.' On going for water, I think of Jesus and the woman at Jacob's well. I tarry a moment, and with streaming eyes beseech the good Lord to let the rivers of life flow into my soul in such measure that they may flow from it in every direction, washing and nourishing every soul I come in contact with, and I always feel as if I had largely partaken from the crystal fountain. As I prepare breakfast, I pray him to prepare an eternal feast for the

whole human family. I set the table, asking that the bread of life might be broken to every sinner. I sit down to eat, imploring the steward of heaven to let us one day sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I call the children, with the petition that the Lord might call them also — call them out from the world as his chosen ones. I wash and dress them, with the desire that the Lord may cleanse and prepare them for his own glory. I serve them at table, and tell them of Him who fed five thousand with a handful of bread. I take them to school, with the injunction, 'Lord, instruct thou them in thy holy word, that they might become wise unto salvation.' On committing them to the teacher, I say, 'Friend of children, take thou care of these little ones.' I return, praying for every soul I meet. On taking the broom to sweep the house, it often comes to my mind that my lot in the world is rather a humble one, and others are so much more favored with this world's goods than I. This, as a matter of course, is the suggestion of the evil one, and I look aloft and say, 'For Jesus,

my dear Saviour's sake, I will be content; for his sake I will do whatsoever is assigned to me;' and as I am sweeping, I pray that my soul might be cleansed from all the dross of hell and the world. Thus I pray at every step. The afternoon I spend with the children in singing praises to Him who lets us live, and in talking of him who calls himself the sinner's Friend, and in praying to him whom I know to be the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. Before I retire, I once more unbosom my soul to him who promised to be a Father to the fatherless, and who 'tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' and the result is, my soul is overflowing with peace and joy and happiness; and do you wonder that I should see angels descending and ascending, and see other such glorious visions? And," continued the heroic girl, "this is what I call praying without ceasing. St. Paul will tell you so, too, when you get to yonder home."

St. Paul says: "Whatsoever you do, do *all* to the glory of God." And whatever we do to the glory of God, is prayer and praise. If I do my fellow-sinner a favor from unselfish and

sympathetic motives, it is my desire that his lot may be the better for it. What else is desire but prayer? What else is prayer but desires expressed? If we pray for our salvation, for the salvation of our friends and the world at large, or for any thing imaginable, we express desires which Jesus puts into our hearts. If we go on errands of mercy—feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoner with spiritual and temporal consolation, we execute desires which the love of Jesus Christ produced in our hearts—desires to show forth the glory of God and to extend his kingdom among men—desires to comply with his command: "Bear ye one another's burden."

Thus we see that praying without ceasing can be practiced by all men, women, and children of all classes and conditions of life. Those who have ample time at their command are commissioned by Jesus Christ to execute his desires, besides their daily devotions, in going about seeking where and how to do good, while those who are poor in this world's goods, who are destined by an all-wise

Providence to eat their bread by the sweat of their brow, may be the richer in grace, the richer in Jesus Christ—as rich in prayer as our heroic servant-girl, who prayed without ceasing. Prayer is a delightful companion to the working-man. It wipes the sweat from his brow; it fans him in hot days; it warms him in cold weather; it shelters him from the storm; it makes his countenance always pleasant. He is ever young and fresh, strong and cheerful.

Many young converts, we say, are strongly beridden with besetting sins, habits, for which they would gladly give their right arm or any treasure at their command, could they but overcome them. This was the case with the writer of these pages. He was one of the "uttermost" whom Jesus came to save, a man fallen to the very bottom of the horrible pit. The Lord found him, raised him up and placed him on a firm foundation. But before he was fully aware of this glorious change, he offended his new friend in a most shameful manner, still practicing the language and work of darkness. He would retire to his closet

with a heavy heart, craving the forgiveness of God under burning tears. Possessing an iron will, he considered himself man enough to master his bad habits. Many times he resolved to bridle his tongue, abstain from swearing and all manner of filthiness, but always failed. Finally, guided by the unerring spirit, he commenced to pray for special grace to overcome profanity, and behold! the black stream within him was stayed and he no longer spoke the language of hell. Being successful in this point, he applied the same remedy to all his idols and besetting sins and bad habits, and by degrees was cleansed from the legions of infernal spirits, who constituted his entire life, and manhood. Now he seems to be clothed in Christ's righteousness, and in his right mind, sitting at Jesus' feet, learning of him how to become acceptable to God and a fit companion for the redeemed in light. He, like Mary Magdalene, had much forgiven, and he too loves his Saviour, as she did who washed his feet with her tears, (and as a child loves its tender mother.) His soul is all on fire for the glory of God, but being confined in a

prison cell, having little or no opportunity to promote the kingdom of his blessed Master, except by prayer, he thought, if the Lord be willing, he would pen some of his better thoughts, hoping that they might prove instrumental in bringing at least one precious soul nearer to God and heaven. Should this be God's will, his prayer would be answered, his soul edified, and his sad lot greatly sweetened.

Prayer.

Father! thou who hast never as yet denied me any request, wilt thou bring it to pass that there may be one or more precious pearls in the crown of glory which is laid up for me. Pearls, gathered by this net of love, which was dictated and spun by thine own Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of a humble and penitent soul. I ask it, not for my sake, but rather for thy glory and the salvation of my brethren through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

The Convict's Prayer.

BY H. M.

Give me a new heart, I pray thee,
Wash me in thy precious blood,
Let my sins be driven from me,
Cleanse me, Jesus, Son of God!
Raise me from this state of nature,
From the pit and miry clay;
Show me, Lord, a brighter future,
Let me see a happier day!

Give me, Lord, thy precious blessing,
Pour thy mercy on me now,
So that I, thy truth confessing,
To thy will may humbly bow.
Give me love to all around me,
Let not malice fill my heart;
Knowing, thou wilt guard and guide me,
Let me act a Christian's part.

To my dearest mother, brethren,
Jesus, be a loving friend,
Let them fly to thee for shelter,
To them peace and comfort send.

In my daily life attend me,
  Help me, Lord, to keep thy word;
From temptation, God, defend me!
  Let the convict's prayer be heard.

The Praying Convict.

Behold, the contrite sinner speaks
  The language known in heaven!
He sighs, he wrestles, and he pleads;
  In tears he sows, in joy he reaps,
And has his sins forgiven.
  Joy is his, eternally his!
Oh, what a glorious change is this,
  To pass from hell to heaven!
Rejoice, O holy saints, rejoice,
  Come, fellow sinners, swell the noise,
And thou, O weary one, be wise,
  Come, and make a better choice.
Put on the armor, wield the sword,
  Fight for our gracious Lord,
And conquer death and hell.

LETTERS FROM CONVICTS.

LETTER FROM H. H.

THE comfort and happiness in serving Jesus Christ, which I have experienced in this place are beyond expression. The pleasure which I have derived from him, in simply looking to him, cannot be painted, neither can the hope imparted to my soul by his spirit be penciled. I have submitted myself to his yoke and found it easy. His burden is light and he has proved a gracious master, and I have concluded to serve him for ever. The pearl of great price is precious to my soul, and I rejoice in God, my Saviour, for evermore. I have received his holy grace, which has enabled me to do away with all the wicked thoughts which once were in my mind and the evil habits which I once practiced. I feel

myself a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things, have passed away, and behold, all things are pleasant and good.

I have passed through the valley of darkness and have experienced the bitterness and sorrow which sin produces, and desire to be a happy man. And glory be to His name, I have found my soul's desire in him; he is my light in dark hours, the joy of my soul and the rock of my salvation; in him centres my all in all; to him will I cling through life, death, and eternity.

May he guide and protect me in every hour of danger, that I may serve him throughout eternity. Amen.

H. H.

Letter from W. H. M.

Dear Brother M.: In giving an account of my conversion, allow me to commence at my great fall. I was arrested June 11th, 1867, in the city of Poughkeepsie, for a very heinous crime and in a very intoxicated state. After getting sober I found that my friends had deserted me, and I was left alone to be-

wail my misery. I was in jail about a month when an aged lady came to tell me of a friend that would stand by me as long as I would stand by him. I looked into my case, reflected, and said to myself: "Will God ever forgive me my many sins?" something within me said he would. It was then and there that I fell on my knees asking God through the merits of his Son to forgive me my past sins. Since then I have been a God-fearing and God-loving man. I am sensible that I am daily doing things which I ought not to do and leave undone the things which the Lord has commanded. By God's grace assisting me I am bound to make my way from earth to heaven, as well as I have, by his grace and assistance, made my way out of the horrible pit and miry clay into ways of pleasantness and peace. My pathway is growing brighter every day. I have no reason to go back, but am determined to press forward in my high calling and gain heaven. I would not give up my hope for ten thousand worlds. Pray for me. May God pour his spirit upon this prison.

W. H. M.

Letter from R. P. L.

It was in the year 1866 that I had the misfortune of striking one of my fellow-beings, which caused his death, and I was sent to jail. There I was visited by a Christian gentleman who made me believe that I was a sinner and needed a Saviour, and that as bad as I was, Jesus Christ the Son of God died for me, and would save me if I would only look to him. After he had gone, his words returned to my mind. I reflected and concluded that he was right. I looked over my sinful life, and mountains of sins rose up before me—and oh, how bad I felt! My burden was severe, and I became very unhappy, and resorted to that good man's Saviour, fell before him, and implored his mercy upon the chief of sinners. That night and the next three days and nights I sought a newness of life which can only be found in Jesus Christ, and it was granted me. I obtained relief on the third night: while praying with all my heart and strength I felt a thrill of joy in my

soul, and was carried off to regions above the world, and dwelt with Jesus. A glorious time it was. Angels were in attendance. It was heaven to my soul. I love Him with all my heart. He is my joy in all my lonely prison hours, the staff and stay for my future life. I regret that I cannot find sufficient language to do him justice. Oh, that all men might come to him and partake of his sweet salvation. He has promised to cast no one out. Since I came to him my life has been a constant stream of happiness, and I glory in his precious name. R. D. L.

Letter from J. H. B. S.

Dear Brother M——: I have been here about twenty-nine months. On my arrival here I was one of the most miserable of God's creatures. After a few months' stay I made up my mind to leave off all my old ways; but alas, I found myself growing worse every day. Finally I attended the prayer-meetings, but whatever I saw and heard there seemed strange to me, until the chaplain told me that

I could not contribute to my happiness by anything that *I* might do, but must simply believe that I was a great sinner and needed a Saviour. It was then that I began to understand the brethren. I turned my thoughts inward, reflected on my past folly, and implored the mercy of my long-suffering God. I soon found that there was no other name given under heaven by which men might be saved, except the name of Jesus Christ. In his name and for his sake I prayed to God that he would help me to believe. For six months I endeavored to give up my all to Jesus, but had no confidence in him. I took up my Bible and found that a man must be born again. In another place it says, "He that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God shall be saved." And again, "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." I took him at his word, and glory be to God, I can say that I am in Christ and he is in me, and there is nothing present nor any thing to come that shall separate me from the love and hope and peace and happiness that I have in Jesus Christ. When I am

tempted and ill-used, I look above the perishable things of the world—look up to my Captain, and ask him for reinforcement to conquer the enemy. Some times all looks dark, but then I look aloft and fix my eyes upon the Sun of righteousness, and the darkness disappears. Although the whole world be against me I will praise the Lord, for he is my portion. He is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He leads me beside the still waters, and I am filled with his love.

I am not what I would wish to be, but by the grace of God, I am what I am. At times I feel that the nails which went through the Saviour's hand had fastened my sins to the cross, and I glory in the same cross wherein St. Paul gloried. I know that I have passed from death unto life, because I love to keep his commandments. Oh, may that grace which is sufficient to save to the uttermost, fill my heart and constrain my entire being to walk upright and holy before my God, and may I be ever ready for the second coming of Christ.

I know that God is my God. He has heard

and answered me in my affliction. He is by my side while walking through the bitter waters of tribulation. He is the rock of my salvation, the joy of my soul, and he says, "Though father and mother may forsake thee, I will take thee up."

My old companions, fare you well;
I cannot go with you to hell;
I care not what the world may say;
No, I will watch, and fight, and pray.

J. H. B. S.

Letter from H. S.

Before I came to this prison, I was one of the most profane swearers and wilful sinners in the world. At times I used to think of my lost condition, and wished to be a Christian, but these feelings were only transient. Trouble came upon my family; I became devoted to the accursed cup, and my wife left me. I resolved to take her life and my own, and went to work about it very coolly. Satan seemed to have a complete mastery over me: man proposes, but the Lord disposes. I was

arrested for an assault to kill, and while under lock and key had ample time for reflection. I was horrified at what I had done, thought it impossible for me to contemplate such a hellish plan. I looked into myself to ascertain the mainspring of my wretchedness, and found that I was overpowered by the enemy of souls. I resolved to become a better man, obtained a Bible, but it did not interest me. I tried to pray, but instead of finding rest I grew worse and suffered exceedingly. It was my heart's desire to become a holy man. What does this mean? The Bible tells us that if we ask God for the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, we shall receive it. I did ask all this time, but did not receive it. I was discouraged, and concluded to investigate the matter. I found that my whole heart was not in it. Darling sins clustered about my soul, which proved for a time too strong for me. In the meantime I was sent to Sing-Sing.

Much to my enjoyment, I found a flourishing prayer-meeting, and a library of religious books. I frequented both and was much en-

couraged, and by degrees lost numberless bad habits, and finally found myself a changed man. I detested and abhorred myself, seeing how merciful God dealt with me, and how ungrateful I have been to him, not even to thank him for my subsistence, and his bounty. I often shed tears when thinking of the sufferings of my blessed Redeemer, who so often invited me by his words: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and *I* will give you rest." Blessed Saviour, I will come! Oh, teach me to be wholly thine!

Since coming to Jesus with my whole heart I have been praying continually, and feel that I am drawing nearer to God, and rejoice in my experience as a follower of Christ. At times the evil one seems to get the best of me; I would waver a little, but with new efforts and boldness storm the gates of heaven, and become more than conqueror. I know that my sins are forgiven, and am persuaded that all things work together for my good, and feel that no power can separate me from my God. I thank him for this affliction, it has brought me to a knowledge of myself, to

a knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, and I long to be instrumental in his hands in the extension of his kingdom and the salvation of sinners. May he make me what I should be.

H. S.

Letter from F. J.

Dear Chaplain: I was sentenced on the 8th day of March, 1867, to two years' confinement in this prison. I deserved it, and I thank the Lord that it is, as it is. I had been leading a very bad life—a great transgressor of the laws of God all the days of my life. Shortly after my arrival here I thought of reformation. I thought what an awful thing it would be to die in prison and without God. I resolved to serve Satan no longer. I obtained permission to visit your office, where a noble helper, Brother J. M., spoke to me concerning my soul's future state, and of a flourishing prayer-meeting, and placed my name upon its list of members. Little did he think what he was doing, but what he did, he did for eternity. I set out with firm resolutions, and by God's grace I mean to follow Christ as long

as I am on earth. When I look back and see what a change I have experienced, it makes me feel proud to know that I am a soldier of the cross, and I mean to fight my way through whatever opposes. There are a great many stumbling blocks put in my way, but I look above for strength to pass them in safety, and I don't look in vain.

Dear chaplain, your meetings are doing great good in this prison. You were the means of bringing me to the foot of the cross. My life during my stay here has been very pleasant which could not be, had I not exchanged masters. I can never thank you and Brother M—— sufficiently for your kind attention to me. It brings tears to my eyes to see you struggling every Sunday to fill our hearts with the love and peace of God. My prayer is: that the Lord may soften every hard heart and bring many more to the foot of the cross. My spare hours are occupied in studying the Scriptures. I am progressing very fast, and I have very pleasant seasons in my cell, holding communion with my Father in heaven. Would to God that my fellow-

men would no longer trouble themselves with the things that perish, but apply their hearts unto wisdom, and attend to their duty and become as happy as I am. I have a great many enemies, but I am to be despised by all men for Christ's sake. He laid down his life for me, and I am willing to do the same for him. I owe him a debt which I can never pay. Oh, how glad I am, that he made himself known to me and gave me grace to make myself known to him as the chief of sinners. He is precious to my soul and I am exceedingly happy all the day long.

Pray for me, dear sir, that I may hold out unto the end. F. T.

Letter from F. M.

Dear Brother M——: It is to the glory of God that I pen you these lines, for my heart is filled with his love.

I left home in my nineteenth year, to find my fortune in the *Great Republic.* I arrived in New York, and found employment, and all things went on well. After a while I became acquainted with a young lady who took full

possession of my heart, and I thought I was a happy man; but the evil one had still power over me, and induced me to take the life of her for whom I would readily have laid down my own, which resulted in my imprisonment for life.

The first three years of my confinement were spent in great sorrow and distress, and I constantly contemplated how I might make an end to my bitter lot. Had it not been for the religious instructions received in childhood, I would have followed the example of Judas—would have killed myself; but the fear to meet an angry God restrained me from executing my resolutions, and I was spared; and it pleased the Heart-searcher to turn my thoughts into a different channel. A dear brother and friend, J. M——, who is now a faithful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, endeavored to soften my hard heart by telling me of a precious Saviour he found some years ago, and of the hope he possessed and the peace he enjoyed; and said he: "Life is exceedingly sweet when animated by Jesus Christ." He asked me to attend the weekly

prayer-meeting, and to turn my thoughts heavenward. I consented, earnestly desiring to become a better man. I attended the meetings for about a year without deriving the least benefit from them, although God was present, and was working in the hearts of many of the brethren; and often I left them much discouraged, thinking that my day of grace is passed, never more to return.

One evening, while in my cell alone, I felt extremely miserable. Never before was I so tired of life as just then; and I looked around in my little room for a convenient chance to end my sufferings. I did not look in vain; but it came in a very unexpected way. As I made ready, the Holy Bible came into my hands, and the thought, "Suppose this book is true!" flashed across my mind. I paused! I fell on my knees—prayed and sobbed and wept like a child. My heart was broke. It was open for the Holy Spirit; and, glory be to God, he entered in. I cannot account for the change, but when I arose from my knees I thought I was the happiest of God's

creatures. I wept for joy, for my burden was gone. My sins were washed away in the blood of the Lamb. Ever since, I went about my duties with a light heart, rejoicing in Jesus, and glorifying God my Saviour. Now I understand the language spoken in the prayer-meeting, and with Brother M—— I can say that life is sweet and precious when animated by Jesus Christ. F. M.

Letter from J. Y. L.

I was born April 7, 1839. My parents taught me to fear the Lord in my childhood. Prayers became a daily repetition, and all things went on well as long as I observed this duty and obeyed my parents. But, breaking loose from parental restraint, I also broke loose from God; and he let me slide into bad company, and my spare hours and late hours and golden hours were spent at the drinking, gambling, and sporting saloons. I enjoyed pleasure after pleasure, and things appeared good and lovely all around me, until I finally found myself lodged in jail. Here a Christian lady visited me from week to week, and

presented me with a Bible. Her visits and gift, however, made no impression on me. After fourteen months' stay I was tried, and sent to this place for the term of ten years and five months.

After about two years I came in contact with a religious convict, who was successful in arousing my slumbering disposition, and I began to think of the welfare of my immortal soul. Doubtless I would have slept longer, and perhaps for ever, had he labored less for the salvation of my soul. He induced me to attend the meetings for prayer. I was somewhat benefited by them, but could as yet not wholly understand the brethren. They spoke of the Spirit, the new birth, how happy they felt in Jesus, and what joy they experienced in their cells with God and Jesus, holding communion with the holy Trinity. Such language was strange to me, but I longed to speak likewise. Retiring to my room at nights, I prayed with great earnestness to God to give me a new heart and pardon my sins. I read the good lady's Bible, which I had retained, and committed myself into the

hands of the Father of mercy. I relied on his word and promise, with the determination never to let him go. After I gave up all to him, and confessed my weakness and unworthiness, promised to forsake my sins, and by his grace to amend. He smiled on me, and gave me a portion of his everlasting Spirit to help me in my new life. But previous to this glorious visitation, the Lord let me feel the horrors of sin most explicitly, and I was very wretched; but the sweeter afterwards was my union with my blessed Saviour. It was on the third day of September, 1867, that the cloud of darkness was for ever lifted from my burdened soul, and words of peace and salvation filled my mind. Joy and happiness are my portion. I love the Saviour and his chosen ones, and all which is good and everlasting. Oh, that all men everywhere, might come to this glorious Saviour, and enjoy the blessings which remain for the people of God, is the humble prayer of

Yours in Christ Jesus, J. V. L.

Letter from J. F.

Dear Brother in the Lord: I am the offspring of poor parents, and consequently mingled in low and mean society, which finally landed me on Sing-Sing's sorrowful shores, to weep over my misfortune for ten bitter years. When I arrived here I was less concerned about my soul than a brute. Although my parents taught me to say prayer while a child, yet a great number of years passed over my head without a thought for God, heaven, or immortality.

I was kindly approached one day while at work by a colored brother in affliction, who spoke to me sweet words of cheer, and finally asked me to come to Jesus. I told him I was no worse than others, and had no concern for religion; but he repeated his visits, and made some impression on my mind. I enlisted for the prayer-meeting, and felt that a change of heart would be acceptable in my deplorable condition. The different experiences, as related by the brethren in the meetings, enlightened my understanding, and I too experi-

enced that I was a great sinner. The brethren were honest in their expressions; they confessed their faults in clear colors, and thanked the Lord that they were not in a worse place than a prison made by hand. Their language came home to my heart, and I too desired to be a Christian. I humbled myself before my God, prayed, sought, and fought until I conquered. The battles against the enemy were many and fierce; but the Lord Jesus was at my side. Often I left the prayer-meeting deeply grieved that I could not testify of the goodness of God, as I had not formed his acquaintance yet. One day my colored friend told me that Jesus was my Friend, and if I would become His friend, I would find peace of mind. Had he been a stranger to me, I would have thought nothing of his words; but as I knew him to be an honest, upright man, I was compelled to believe him. I went to Jesus with my sins and all. I lay before him one night for hours, asking, pleading, begging, praying for pardon for innumerable offences committed against him and my fellow-men. I was really sorry for

what I had done through all my life—for I had done nothing but wrong. I cannot account for the result. It came to pass I know not how, but from that hour I was a changed man. I love the Holy Bible, love to pray, love the sanctuary, would like to go there every day, love God's people, and appreciate their society.

The Lord has graciously opened my eyes, and I see myself the greatest sinner under heaven, and am astonished to know that God should condescend to save so unworthy a worm, who offended him every day of his existence.

It was on the 17th of January, 1867, that I found him, and I will give him up when he ceases to exist.

Your praying Brother, J. F.

Letter from G. M.

In the spring of 1867, I was arrested and sent for two and a half years, for grand larceny, to this prison. It was the first time that I ever was put under lock and key. Seeing my character ruined and my family dis-

graced, I became extremely miserable, especially when I considered that I have praying parents who from my infancy and even now are continually bearing me to the throne of grace. I confess it was a hard struggle when I first broke loose from them; but an evil heart survived over parental affection, and I found myself on the broad road to ruin. When confined, it pleased the Lord to send me dear friends with consolation suitable to my case. Among others was a young lady who had some influence over me, and who besought me with tears to give my heart to God. My heart was very repulsive, but I could not withstand burning tears from so noble a soul. I was grieved, asked her forgiveness, which was readily granted, and I promised to amend. For awhile I laughed at her proposal, but the still small voice whispered: "Suppose Christianity is a reality after all, and the Bible be true, what will be my fate? Is it not better to live in a manner which will insure timely and eternal happiness, than prepare myself for hell?"

These questions, and thousands of others

like them, presented themselves to my mind, and would doubtless have been answered in the neglect of duty, had it not been for a mother's prayers, for the lessons of childhood, and the earnest entreaty of my lady friend. After arriving here, I resolved to attend to these things. I went to the library for reading matter, and found "Nelson's Cause and Cure of Infidelity." I hesitated about taking it, but something within whispered: "You must take it." On perusing its pages, I became deeply interested in it, and I finally was convinced of the reality and purity of Christianity, and desired to know and feel its power. I prayed and longed for a change of heart. My eyes were opened gradually. I saw the sinfulness of my nature, and felt the terrors of a broken law. The sword of vengeance was upon me; an agonizing Saviour, whose hands I had pierced, was beside me, while hell opened itself beneath me. My condition was most fearful, without the least hope. At last I arrived at the place where he—Nelson—gave his conversion. Here a ray of hope entered into my

soul. Seeing how graciously the Lord dealt with him, I too took courage. Presently I came to his remedy, and resolved to apply it. I knelt and poured forth my soul in prayer; trembling, I called upon the name of Jesus. What pangs of soul did I not then experience! Despair overwhelmed my sinking heart, and my hope for the eternal shore was very faint, yet I continued to cry aloud unto the Lord for mercy, when suddenly these words flashed across my mind: "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." I fixed my eyes upon Him. I saw him wrestling with the king of darkness; beheld the great drops of blood running down his burning face; heard his last words: "It is finished." I tarried with him, and he had compassion on me, and behold, a miracle is wrought! My burden was gone, the evil spirit was gone, my soul was at rest, and I was overcome for joy. I was a new creature. I could not believe it. It looked too good, too grand and sweet. It looked too much like a dream; but it proved a change of heart, a new nature, a new and rejoicing man in

Christ Jesus. Oh, how sweet is his name to me, and all his precious sayings. Is there music on earth or in heaven equal to his voice? What have I done to deserve this? Indeed, language is too feeble an instrument to convey an idea of the perfect transport of bliss which was mine at that moment when I resolved to serve Christ the rest of my life, and thus far I have had no cause to regret my resolution.

At first it appeared hard to confess Christ before the world. I shall never forget how my cheeks burned with shame when I first rose in the prayer-meeting, to tell the brethren how mercifully and gloriously the Lord had dealt with me; but by his grace I overcame every obstacle, even the foul habit of using his holy name in vain. Jesus, ever dear and ever near with his love and grace, has proved a sufficient remedy for every detestable idol of my soul. In him I live, and know that no power on earth or in hell can part us, and I have experienced that the Christian's life is a life of great joy. Glory be to him for evermore!

G. M.

Letter from H. M.

My dear Friend and Brother in Jesus Christ: In sitting down, according to my promise, to give you a statement of my conversion, I think it well to commence with my coming to this place, and give you the details of my experience—my hopes and fears, ups and downs, trials and temptations, and my heart's true history.

I am glad that you asked me to write this for you and to the glory of God, for I have longed for a great while to unbosom myself to some one who, I feel, has an interest in my spiritual welfare, and I am confident that you have.

In the first place, when I was arrested, my heart was stored with all sorts of wickedness, having mixed with the abandoned of both sexes for a number of years. It is not to be expected that I would come off undefiled; but at the same time I never laid myself liable to the force of human laws until the year 1863, when I deserted my regiment, was captured, pardoned, reinstated, and deserted again at

Cold Harbor, in 1864. From that day I fell deeper and deeper in sin, commenced jumping bounties, spending the money in dissipation, for which a merciful God may forgive me, through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

In 1865 I received the last bounty, enlisting in the Thirty-fourth New Jersey infantry at Trenton, N. J., and was sent to my regiment, but never reached it. I went from Trenton to Cairo, Ill., and there joined the Sixteenth army corps, General Smith's fleet. We left there and went to Memphis, Tenn. I ran the guards and went ashore, got drunk, as usual, and nearly beaten to death, was put under medical treatment, and came very near dying in the hospital at Vicksburg. A merciful God spared my life in spite of all my transgressions and ungratefulness to him and my fellow-men.

After a partial recovery I was appointed ward-master in the same hospital, but the *fire-water* soon got the better of me again, was found intoxicated, and sent to New Orleans. Here I deserted, but was picked up by a provost-guard, sent to Alabama Cotton-

press, and from there under guard to Fort Gamis, Ala. I remained there until I received an honorable discharge.

I started for home, was robbed on the boat, and finally reached New York, July 12, 1865. My stay here corresponded with my former life, until my money and so-called friends were gone.

For some time after my arrival here I felt as if I were losing my senses. I was in a perfect swoon, not comprehending my condition, yet I had no feelings nor thoughts that I ought to forsake my sinful habits and repent. I hated myself and my surrounding sufferers. About this time I was put into a contract-shop. Here I met with Brothers R—— and F——, who saw and understood my case, and very frequently spoke to me on and about the welfare of my immortal soul. I could not understand them, but they induced me to attend their weekly prayer-meeting and to abstain from swearing, for at that time I was a fearfully profane man. Before I attended the meetings, I had occasion to converse with another member, who told me that he went

there to have a little fun and to get away from his shop and keeper and meet some of his old friends, and I considered the whole affair as downright hypocrisy. All this time I felt the pressure of sin on my soul, but was too proud to let any one know it.

One day, going to the chaplain's office, I picked up a tract, entitled, "Cornwall Miner." I had been in a habit of taking tracts before, but never read them, believing them to be a lot of lies, or at best the fancies of some enthusiast. However, this one I read and cast it aside, but could not get its contents out of my heart. It was the history of a profane man, who, by hearing the fourteenth chapter of St. John read to him, became impressed and convinced of his depravity, humbled himself before God, and through his Spirit became wise unto salvation. He resorted to his school-books, learned to read, in order that he might fathom the truths of God's holy word himself. He became deeply rooted in Jesus Christ, and bore much fruit to the glory of God.

I felt rebuked, seeing the advantage I had

over this poor unlettered man. There was no excuse for me. I learned the chapter by heart and tried to pray, but instead of getting easier in my mind, I felt the pangs of sin more and more, with no hope for this world or that which is to come. I went to the chaplain, told him my misery, and received good advice, but it did not reach my case. I went again, with the same result. In the mean time I had joined the prayer-meeting, and felt it good to be there, and intended to reveal my case to the brethren and ask their intercession, but a cowardly shame came over me and held me back. Meeting after meeting passed by, and still I remained mute, contrary to the dictation of my conscience, and sorrow and despair were my daily experience. Night after night I fell upon my knees and poured out my soul in prayer to God, acknowledging my sinfulness, and asking pardon for Christ's sake, promising the almighty God that if he would spare my life until the following week, I would make a confession before my fellow-men, and trusting to his grace, I would forsake my sins and lead a

new life. While I was pleading at the throne of grace, the answer came. Oh, brother, I could have shouted for joy. I felt that peace within me which the world cannot give nor take away. I could not realize it at first that I, the chief of sinners, could receive mercy, much less feel an assurance of pardon. What was I, that the Almighty should hear me and take compassion on me? I thought it impossible to be thus greatly favored, until I commenced to reflect on the goodness and promises of God, and concluded that it was really the work of God's Holy Spirit. I never had such feelings before. My peace at times flowed like a river.

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be all the praise for ever.

On looking into my prayer-book this morning, I find this entry: "Thursday, April 4, 1867. I resolved to become a Christian, God helping and strengthening me in my resolution." This I have never regretted. Weak and sinful as I am, I would not give up my hope for all this world contains. I I am aware that I have grieved the Holy

Spirit almost numberless times since he first spoke peace to my soul; but I have given myself up, body and soul, to Jesus Christ, to do with me what he sees fit.

I made an awful prayer the other night—that He might afflict me in body or soul, that I might be brought to love him more than I do now. I feel so hard-hearted at times, and know that the devil has power over me still, but I am assured that Jesus can save to the uttermost; were it not for this assurance, my sins would drive me to despair. I am not as grateful to my God as an honest man ought to be, to his preserver and benefactor. O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner, and give me a new heart, and renew a right mind within me!

As I look back over the ground I have just traveled through, I am constrained to say that, next to God, I owe my conversion to the efforts of Christian men and women. One lady especially—Mrs. K——, of New York—deserves my most heartfelt thanks for the ceaseless interest manifested in my behalf. From the beginning of my imprison-

ment until the present day she followed me with a mother's love and sympathy, which made my hard lot quite tolerable. May the mighty God bless her and hers abundantly, and all other friends and Christians who take an interest in the welfare and salvation of fallen men and women, is the sincere desire of

Your most affectionate brother in Jesus,

H. M.

Letter from J. E. S.

In writing this sketch of my experience, I have but two objects in view, namely, to show how God manifested himself towards the penitent sinner, and that his redeeming love is sufficient to save to the uttermost.

My father and mother were followers of our Lord, and both stand to-day as living monuments of his grace. Their hearts' desire was to bring up their offspring in the fear of the Lord, and instructed me unceasingly in the word of God, and sent me to a religious institution where I became familiar with the doctrines of the Bible. But this was knowledge without faith; and as I grew older, I became

more and more careless and indifferent about spiritual things. I laid the Bible aside, and began to live for this world only. The restraints of a parental policy became intolerable, and I concluded to seek my fortune in America. Here I enjoyed religious liberty, and was free from fanatic intrusion. Yet I remained discontented. My parents' shadows were always before me, and their parting words sounded for ever in my ears; besides, a silent voice within spake louder and louder, and thundered fearfully against my hard heart To rid my mind of this increasing uneasiness, I mingled in gay society, and associated with the workers of iniquity. But this would not satisfy the wants of my soul. Finally, I resolved to lead a better life, and do some good by enlisting under my adopted country's banner. As I became acquainted with my fellow-soldiers, and found that they consisted of the same element which I abhorred, I also found my resolutions insufficient, and I had to yield to the spirit of the camp—profanity and all manner of evil. It was a rarity to hear the gospel preached, or even a spiritual

prayer offered, except, perhaps, by a dying soldier. God's laws, however, remained unproclaimed; yet they were plainly pointed out to us on the battle-field, hospital, and prisons, and God's hand of mercy wooed many sin-stricken souls to that field of glory where sorrow is not known. Seeing the great danger in battles, I again resolved to do some good, so that if it should be my lot to fall, I would have something wherewith to enter heaven; besides, the sufferings of my comrades induced me, at the peril of my life, to do many deeds of mercy for them. This, however, was done from purely selfish motives, for my main object was *promotion.*

Thus I spent three years in great excitement and danger, and became established in every sinful habit and vice practiced by mortals; but in spite of all my transgressions and ungratefulness, the merciful God was pleased to spare me, and I returned sound and safe to New York, with a firm determination to become a better man. I secured a good home, and all things were pleasant for a while; but the enemy within would not let me rest—tore

me from my friends, and plunged me deeper and deeper in the abyss of sin, until there was nothing good left within me. In the mean time, God was continually calling me to repentance; but I was deaf, and dumb, and blind, and rejected the only Saviour. I would not listen to the preaching of his blessed gospel until I was by law compelled to do so. Not until I found myself encased by gray walls and iron bars, and the Holy Spirit had totally broken my rocky heart, and laid me in a most helpless condition, would I make use of the common sense which God gave me. On the first Sunday of my imprisonment I heard the first sermon preached in six years. Its text was taken from the fifty-first Psalm, first verse: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." These words, which I had so often heard from my parents, were the means of arousing my slumbering soul, and they brought me to the foot of the cross to seek pardon and forgiveness, peace and rest, from our blessed Redeemer, which I so

abundantly obtained. I shall never forget the power of these overwhelming words, that brought conviction on my heart. I felt so very forlorn, and it seemed as if God and man had forsaken me, and left me to the mercy of Satan. I could not pray, for I felt myself too great a sinner to approach a holy God. I felt very miserable—could not rest, and had no peace. I tried every thing except coming to Jesus. I spent a whole week in great agony, looking with hope for the return of Sunday, when by the next sermon I expected to be instructed and enlightened; but to my grief found the speaker at too great a distance to be thoroughly heard and understood. The following day I received a New Testament from the chaplain, which I attentively read, and ere long I found myself to be a changed man. It was on the third of February, 1868, that I found peace in believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as my only Saviour. The blessed book became a treasure to my soul; every page contained something new, and in almost every letter I see the image of Jesus Christ, who is now the

idol of my soul. In the mean time I heard of a weekly prayer-meeting, and obtained permission to attend it. I took part in the exercises, which did me much good, and have experienced that faithful prayer is the key of heaven. And now whatever may cross my path, be it good or evil, pleasure or affliction, joy or sorrow, I never shall forget the Giver of the glorious salvation with which he has blessed me in the darkest hour of my life, and who has given me grace to look to him for grace to resist whenever the tempter is nigh. Should my foot slip, I will remember that "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The love of God has filled my heart with brotherly love and yearning for the salvation of my fellow-men, which, according to our Saviour, is the second great commandment. Prayer, meditation, self-examination, and self-denial have become my great delight. The Saviour and his cause are uppermost in my heart. His sayings and promises are food to me. They satisfy my hunger and thirst after the truth and righteousness. To say the least, I feel myself a

new man. My heart is changed, my soul rejoices, and my spirit magnifies the Lord my God. By his grace I am what I am, *a converted sinner*, who seeks the glorification of God's holy name and the salvation of fallen man.

Yours in Christ Jesus, J. E. S.

Letter from C. B.

Soon after I came to this prison I was led by the blessing of God to be more and more concerned about the welfare of my soul, and finally I came to the conclusion that I would strive to serve God through any and every circumstance that may surround my future life, and with the little influence that I possess try to impart to those around me that peace which I have found in God. I have attended the prayer-meeting for about three months, and it has proved a blessing to me. I am confident that what this religion has done for me, it can do for thousands of others. There is nothing to be compared to an earnest, heart-felt prayer; and if the authorities would only lend a helping hand, this prison would

soon be empty, and thousands who are now on the way to destruction would soon be capable of using their influence in the extension of the kingdom of God. C. B.

Letter from L. R.

Since I have been confined in this prison, but especially since I attended the prayer-meeting, I have been led to examine my past career, and find it not acceptable to God. I am using my utmost endeavors to obtain that forgiveness with God which will insure my eternal life in heaven.

Notwithstanding having in my youth received a Jewish education, I am led to believe that true happiness may be derived in believing in the teaching of the gospel. I will hope and pray to God that he may lead me to do that which is right. L. R.

Letter from J. T.

I am not ashamed of the testimony of my Lord, nor of his servants. I will give you a little of my experience which I acquired in this place. When I was brought to this

prison, I little thought I would have that peace of mind which I have to-day. The first six months that I was here, I was a living hell to myself. Young and foolish, I loved darkness rather than light, or, rather, I was kept in the dark. I was not as much enlightened as some of my companions here. A member of the prayer-meeting persuaded me to read the Scriptures. I did so, and before I was half through with them I arrived at the conclusion that God is good, but man is vanity. The reason I did not appreciate the Scriptures before now, is because I was in darkness, and loved it better than light. Now I am getting light through the gospel. I know that my Redeemer liveth. He bled, died, and arose from the dead, and still lives for me. Surely I do believe the truth of his word; it is my hope, my life, and my all. I began a new life, and live with a Saviour in the world.

J. T.

Letter from H. H. N.

Previous to my imprisonment I led a very wicked and sinful life. I was near the brink

of ruin, and could almost hear the wails and groans of the lost in hell. I trust, however, by the mercy of a sin-forgiving God, that I have been saved from an awful catastrophe of an eternal death. I am resolved, by the grace of God, to lead a better life. Like the prodigal, I strayed away from home; but the pious example of a godly mother, and the religious training of my youth, returned to my mind, and I turned my face homeward. This captivity has been the means of my awakening. My trust is in the grace of God for my final salvation.

I earnestly invoke an interest in the prayers of God's people for my present, future, and eternal welfare.

H. H. N.

Letter from T. H. F.

Dear Chaplain: I desire to add my testimony to that of others for the many blessings which I have received at our weekly prayer-meeting, and which has been instrumental, to a great extent, in bringing me back to God.

For the past years I have been a stranger to Jesus, but I feel that God, through his love and mercy, has received the penitent prodigal with outstretched arms. When I first came to this place, I was so very glad when you asked me if I wished to attend prayer-meeting. Instantly the scenes of my early youth came upon my mind. The old meeting-house and the spot where God converted my soul years ago was before me. My mind was made up at once to return. Again I sought the Saviour, and brought my heavily-burdened soul to Jesus. On the night after the above-mentioned interview, I humbled myself on my knees before God, and prayed fervently for pardon, something that I had not done for five or six years. Oh, how I thank God for that hour! How I bless God for the prayer-meeting, where we can have our spiritual strength renewed. I thank God for all his blessings. May I ever be found watchful and prayerful, is the earnest desire of

Yours, in Christ,

J. H. F.

Letter from J. H. Y.

God has oftentimes overwhelmed me with dismay and confusion. He let fly the arrow that pierced my heart. He has afflicted me in body and soul, and yet I can truly say that all these experiences have been the means at least of teaching me how to say, "Our Father, who art in heaven." I bless God that so many opportunities are offered even here for souls to come up through their trials, and resort to the bleeding side of Jesus, and have all their sins washed away, and their afflictions sanctified to their soul's good.

I have been much interested and blessed by the public exercises every Sabbath in the chapel, and especially so, as from week to week we have met for conference and prayer. There it has been my privilege to meet my Saviour. There the kingdom of my God and Saviour has been opened. There I have learned how sweet it is to pray and praise him. There the realms of hope have dawned upon me. There the Sun of righteousness has arisen with healing on his wings. I thank

God for the beginning, for the progress, for that true manhood, and spiritual self, which I have been made to realize during my stay here. I mean to continue to press forward in this good way to the end, that I may finally rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

These being a few of the numberless benefits and blessings which God in his infinite goodness and mercy permitted me to enjoy, I thank him for the victory, that this poor, weak, struggling soul gained over sin through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To his name be all the glory for ever and ever.

J. H. V.

LETTER FROM W. L.

HAVING been a soldier in the British army for many years, and traveling the world over in pursuit of happiness, I have at last found Him, who is called the sinner's Friend. I have experienced the vanities of the world, and sought happiness where it cannot be found. I have often been denounced as irrecoverably lost; but glory be to the blessed

Jesus, he has visited my soul at last with his constraining and irresistible love, and by his grace I mean to hold fast to him with all the strength he gives me. I know from dear experience that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and I am persuaded that no power visible or invisible can separate me from him. He is my only hope for salvation, and my all in all. W. L.

Letter from M. H. S.

I am grateful for the privilege of penning a few lines to the glory of God in giving my experience.

I am happy to say that I am a changed man. I do not regret my misfortune, for it proved a great blessing to me. He has taught me that Jesus Christ is my best friend. He has enabled me to bear my burden with ease and pleasure.

Before I was arrested, the theatre, billiard-saloon, gay men and women, occupied the greater part of my time. I deceived my parents and friends by pretending to be at my daily occupation, when in fact I was at the

haunts of sin and dissipation, but would take care to be at the regular family services mornings and evenings. My soul was thirsting after pleasure and happiness, but I remained unsatisfied. On the Sabbaths I would frequent St. Peter's Episcopal church, in company of some young ladies, and thus I covered all suspicions of sinful habits. Often I laid myself down to sleep, fearing to awake in eternity, and to find myself in the gulf of despair.

The first thing that brought me to a right mind was the singing of Miss E. F—— the beautiful song, entitled, "Angels, take me." This went to my heart, and I, too, desired to be taken by good angels. I wept and prayed, and resolved to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. My only comfort is the Bible and its precious Author. This book contains all that my soul desires. It is a whole library to me. With it, and the prayer-meeting, and the grace of God, I think I will succeed in running the race set before me. I love the sanctuary, I love God's people, and our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. . . . . M. H. S.

Letter from W. B.

It gives me pleasure to make a few statements in regard to my religious experience in this prison.

I cannot say that I ever could be called a very wicked man. I used to believe that if we did what 's right and were honest, we were sufficiently religious; but for some years I felt the need of something more, and on entering this prison I made up my mind to seek the Saviour, if he would receive me at this late hour—aged 58. I commenced on the very first night of my arrival, and continued to pray morning and night ever since. For some months my prayers were unheard. They were selfish. I prayed for long life and temporal blessings, and left the glory of God out of view. At one time when I was thus praying, it seemed as if some one said to me: "That is God's business." My eyes were partly opened; I saw my folly; and reading an article on faith in a paper, I felt that the one thing needful was "*faith*" *in Jesus Christ*, which was heretofore unknown to me.

I applied my whole heart to Jesus, and oh, what a change I felt immediately! What a happy night I experienced! I could hardly keep from shouting, and I felt as if I could embrace every one that ever named the name of Jesus. It was beyond my comprehension that an old sinner like me could be saved. I have had many delightful seasons since that time, and my soul is exceedingly glad in the Lord. Dark hours will return, but I overcome them by looking unto Jesus. By his grace I have found myself to be more than conqueror.

W. B.

LETTER FROM C. N.

IN 1864 I left home, at the age of 19, to seek my fortune in New York city. Here I took part in all fashionable vices of the day. When the contents of my purse were consumed, I joined the army, but soon took sick, and was sent to the hospital, where I began to reflect on my past conduct, and determined to lead a different life; but trusting in my own strength, I failed. After regaining my

health partially, I obtained my discharge. I returned to New York and to my former habits, notwithstanding the continual striving of the Holy Spirit, and the good resolutions formed in my own strength. I was oftentimes surprised by acting contrary to my own will and desire, yet I could not possibly overcome long-acquired habits. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" then might I do good, who was accustomed to do evil.

In May, 1866, I committed a crime for which I was sent to this place. On my arrival, being quite sick, I was taken to the hospital, and was told that my days were numbered, and I could not survive three months. After a few days the chaplain, Rev. J. B. S——, made his rounds and spoke so kindly to me that I could not restrain tears. My thoughts went back to my youthful days. My conscience began to lash me, and I felt miserable. "He will freely forgive you," said the good chaplain. "Take him at his word. Hear what he said: 'Whosoever will come to me, I will in no wise cast out.' Accept his offer, and he

will accept you." I had heard these words very often before, but for the first time they reached my heart and I longed for peace. I determined with God's help to seek earnestly after it, and I daily read his long neglected word, greatly feeling my unworthiness, depravity and weakness. For three months I struggled unsuccessfully against my evil nature, never firmly surrendering my case to Him whom I endeavored to worship, until in the prayer-meeting, when I heard others praising God, my soul was drawn out after the blessed Saviour. Oh, how my heart yearned to experience their feelings. I always looked forward to these meetings with great joy and anticipation. It was not until after attending them for some time that I found peace in believing. On the night of the 17th of May, 1867, when, as usual, in the solitude of my cell, I fell upon my knees and prayed earnestly to God, for the sake of his dear Son, not to cast me off. I felt oppressed in spirit and was on the verge of despair. I began to fear that there was no mercy for me; when lo! how can I describe it. I felt as I never felt

before. All the gracious promises of God seemed to be mine. They rushed to my memory and I found them to be *yea and amen to them that believe.* I now for the first time felt the indescribable love of Jesus Christ, and the assurance, that I was his and he was mine.

Oh, the bliss and joy of a soul in its earliest love! I could say with the poet:

"No tongue can express the sweet joy and peace," etc.

I feel that words are inadequate to express my peace, joy, and happiness, when first I saw the dear Saviour. He took my load from me; he cast off my filthy rags and clothed me in his own righteousness and enabled me to call God: "My heavenly Father." He raised me out of a horrible pit, put a new song into my mouth, a song of heaven, which induces my rejoicing soul in spite of the great bodily pain which I suffer, to praise, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

C. N.

Letter from C. M.

It is the grace of God which induces me to testify of his goodness by penning a part of my experience.

In my early youth I was led to love God, but being cast upon the ocean of the world I floated with its tide of pleasure and vanity, until it landed me in the secure harbor at Sing-Sing.

In 1856, God in his infinite mercy changed my heart and permitted me to experience the sweet peace of Jesus. I became a member of a church in New York, and walked humbly before God for several years. I considered myself strong and found fault with the weakness of my brethren. By degrees I fell *lower and lower*, until I found a refuge in the lowest state of existence: a prison. Here my eyes were reopened and glory be to God for receiving the wanderer into his household again. I returned to my Bible and to my Saviour and with penitential tears I sought his forgiveness. The more I studied his precious

word, the more I saw the sinfulness of my soul. At first I doubted my salvation until I read the consoling passage: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all unrighteousness." These words were as healing balsam to my sorrowing soul, and with all possible strength I stormed the gates of heaven, and in due time the blessing was received and I became a rejoicing sinner in Christ Jesus my dearest Lord.

C. M.

LETTER FROM W. W.

I WAS born on the fourth day of November, 1825, in one of the central counties of Ireland. My father died when I was twelve years old, a circumstance which necessitated the separation of our family. My mother did not long survive those trials, and she also was called away to return no more. I was apprenticed to a saddler. I came to the United States some twenty years ago and located in Ulster county, N. Y. My career has alternated in the manner usual to a man without earthly cares of any kind, and being of a live-

ly temperament I indulged freely in what is termed the "social glass," and have been subject to the influence of its contents, a propensity that I now have no hesitation in pronouncing it an agent of my destruction, but I was not under its influence at the time of the commission of the crime for which I am now a prisoner. The receipt of certain information caused me to be more moderate in the use of the cup, but not until I had experienced the horrors of delirium tremens, and I keenly felt; "that it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder," and my reasoning faculties had greatly suffered, so much so, that I sent a fellow-being to a premature grave.

I was an inmate of the Ulster county jail for two years and nine months, during which time I was formally sentenced to death three different times. It was then that I became acquainted with the sublimity of the Christian religion. Rev. W——, and Mr. R——, of Kingston, were indefatigable in their attention to my spiritual wants, as were also many Christian ladies of that county. May God

bless, and pour upon them the dew of his mercy for ever.

Contemplate a being in my situation: On the eve of the day preceding the one which was to see me, as I then thought, launched into eternity in the most ignominious manner practiced by civilized nations, when from just beneath the window of my cell the sounds of the workingman's hammer, who was constructing the instrument of death, penetrating through the hall, sending a thrill of agony to my heart. Who can imagine my misery! Man proposes, but God disposes. Yes, it is that God whose ways are past finding out, who induced the chief magistrate of the state to commute my sentence to an imprisonment for life. I feel deeply grateful for this interposition of the Executive clemency, and pray for its author.

As yet, I was a stranger to vital religion, and I have often thought since then, had it pleased God to send me into eternity, I would have hurled defiance into the faces of my enemies from the fatal platform. The thought causes me to shudder as I pen it, and I bless God

for the change in my heart, and for leading me to feel as I now do regarding those scenes. Voltaire, Rousseau, and Payne, at one time made some impression on my mind and I was skeptically disposed as to the truths of the Bible. I owe it to early impressions, and precepts of a dear mother, that I did not become an active disciple of these confirmed infidels.

I arrived here December 29, 1865, with a mind swayed hither and thither by contending emotions. I resolved, however, God being my helper, to live my remaining days closer to that Being whom I had so grievously offended ever since I was able to sin. I heard of a prosperous prayer-meeting, but did not attend it until I was repeatedly invited by some of its members. Finally, I ventured in, and am now free to confess that its weekly exercises are both impressive and edifying. The interchange of religious sentiments and experience has a potent influence for good. It would be a great calamity to me should I be deprived of the privilege of attending these means of grace. I thank my heavenly Father

for what he has done for me. I feel an especial delight in conversing with him and in studying his blessed word. Through all my life, sacred or spiritual exercises were distasteful to me, but things are changed now. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. Glory be to God.

Some of my Christian friends can mark the time and place where they were converted and transferred from the bondage of sin and Satan, to that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. I have not experienced any sudden manifestations, yet there is a very palpable fact in connection with my case: I love my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. I can believe and trust in him. Though I am vile and blood-stained, he will wash me from my sins, and cleanse me from all my wickedness. Yes, his sacrificial atonement is fully efficacious to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. I came, and he has not cast me out, neither will he refuse to listen to others, but will embrace all in his arms of love. He ever liveth to make intercession for us, and I feel

that he has prepared a mansion even for me, the chief of sinners. W. W.

Letter from J. R.

Dear Brother: I have great cause to be thankful to God, for I was sentenced to be executed after the expiration of twelve months' imprisonment, for murder in the first degree. I entered this prison in a very gloomy state of mind. I felt the bitterness of my portion, which an Allwise Providence dealt out to me. It seemed to surpass my strength. I was poor and friendless and my soul was desolate, yet my faith, although weak, had not quite forsaken me. I was still trusting in that God who had rescued me from an immediate death upon the scaffold. Without his special grace I would doubtless have found my doom in the gulf of despair. My hours of sorrow were many and long, and life seemed at times an intolerable burden. One night, while nourishing my sorrow and looking into the dark future, lamenting and feeling myself the most unhappy and miserable creature under the sun,

an inward voice whispered, "Look to Jesus, whether you are guilty or innocent; he will be your friend." I pictured the crucifixion to my mind, and saw how he died on the cross, how he suffered, and how great his agony was, how he prayed for his enemies, and how he sweat great drops of blood in the garden. All these facts presented themselves to my mental view—and oh, how trifling did my affliction appear in comparison to those of my dying Saviour. Had I been executed, although innocent of the crime I am accused of, I would not have suffered as innocently as he did, for I was, and am still, exceedingly vile and sinful, and my just reward would be, eternal punishment, whereas he is infinitely holy. I did not hesitate any longer; I came to Jesus with a single eye and an humble heart; sad and mournful I cast myself at his feet and sought his forgiveness. From that moment my heart was made glad, and I was happy in my Saviour. I found a resting-place—a sure haven—safe from all the tempests of the world. I found new strength in Christ to bear my lot with resignation and

patience, and I am armed with a new and strong faith that the Lord would yet vindicate my "Rights" and make me come out in the end triumphant over my enemies.

My heavenly Father sends me daily blessings. He has raised me out of the horrible pit, he has placed me on a rock, and given me Christian friends to help and sympathize with me. These friends are living monuments of God's infinite goodness—mercies which he is ever extending to those of his creatures, who with sincere and contrite hearts endeavor to wait upon him.

The weekly prayer-meetings in this prison were and are a great source of spiritual enjoyment to me. There I meet those of my brothers who praise and glorify the Lord through his beloved Son our Redeemer, in whom I delight. They are a fountain of blessings, and are productive of much good. My vessels were always filled there, from which I draw day after day, during the whole week.

In conclusion, I must say from the abundance of my heart, that my soul is filled with

peace, and my spirit rejoices in the Lord my Saviour. I. R.

Letter from J. R. P.

Dear Friend: I deeply lament that I should be the occasion of so much sorrow and grief to my parents, brethren, and friends. The past I cannot recall, and would not if I could; but, dear friend, I am anxious to fix the impression upon your mind, that by the mercy of God, through conviction, contrition, and conversion, I have been rescued from the burning. My afflictions have taught me many excellent lessons, for which I am thankful to the great Head of the church. Without these "stripes," in all probability I would be a slave to sin to-day. I can adopt the language of the great apostle, and say from my heart, "These light afflictions are working out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It has been good for me to be afflicted. Like the prodigal Son, I had left my father's house; my foolish and wicked heart drove me off into a far country, and among strangers. I was famishing and hun-

gry. I was lost and wretched. All at once light flashed upon my mind. I saw my condition, and said to myself, "My Father's servants have bread enough and to spare, while I perish with hunger; I will arise and go to my Father, perhaps he will have pity on me, and receive me again." Blessed be his holy name, I have not been disappointed. My reception at my Father's mansion was all my poor, sin-stricken soul could desire, and a great deal more than I could bear. In this painful episode I have been taught my weakness and frailty, and also my dependence on my dear Saviour, as the anchor of all my hopes. I am glad to assure you that I possess a Pearl of great price, and would not exchange it for all the wealth of the universe. It is so excellent and precious that all else is poverty. I cherish the anticipation at some future time, of giving my beloved ones a fair demonstration of my attachment to the cross which I have taken up, never again to lay it down. Oh, the crown of glory which is laid up for me, how precious, how darling it looks!

My daily language is: Lord, what wilt thou

have me to do? So far as I have ability to execute his orders by doing his will, it shall be done, for I owe him a debt which I can never pay. I was sick with a deadly leprosy, and he cured me. I was ignorant, and he instructed me and gave me wisdom. I was afflicted, and he became my comforter. I was in prison, and he came to me and gave me joy for sorrow, love for hatred, pleasure for pain, and a heart of flesh for a heart of stone. I was downcast and distressed, and he bound up my broken heart, and put a new song into my mouth. I was dead, and he made me alive again, and gave me precious manna for my hungry soul. He led me to still waters, and I am feasting upon his bounty most effectually.

Glory be to his holy name, for he has done it all, and I will praise him for ever, and for ever. J. R. D.

Letter from J. L. W.

I was a child of sin of the worst kind. Saloons of various kinds, drinking, gambling, and other vices were the elements in which I

loved to dwell. I went on and on, until I found myself in prison. It was here that the Lord opened my eyes and showed me how vile a creature I am. Shortly after I arrived here, my dear old mother sent me a Testament with her likeness affixed to it. This, for the first time in my manhood, brought tears to my eyes, and I humbled myself before God, praying that my hard heart might be softened, my burden removed, my sins forgiven, and my peace with God established. I prayed until he heard me and the peace of Christ flowed into my soul in large streams. The chaplain was greatly instrumental in my progress. He sympathized with me, and showed me that good might come out of evil, and requested me to attend the prayer-meetings to which I readily consented, for I was indeed tired of my hell-faring life. Knowing that my praying mother was unceasingly wrestling with the angel of the covenant for my salvation, I took courage and finally obtained that peace of soul which Jesus promised to leave with his disciples. And now I feel that I have a friend indeed. My sins

are forgiven and I am a happy man in Christ Jesus. J. L. W.

Letter from J. W.

I was born in Ireland. In early boyhood I deserted my parents, and followed the rough life of the sea-faring man. I have seen almost every seaport town, in the known world, civilized and pagan. I have been a most fearful and profane man, hardly ever uttering a sentence from the abundance of my sinful heart, without using God's holy name in vain. I have violated each and every one of the ten commandments and every precept of the divine law, and if there was ever a demon in the flesh, it was I. Yes, I was the one.

The vilest of the vile, I entered into this life of confinement. I had battled against elements of nature and was more or less always successful, but stone and iron proved too much for me. I found myself out generaled, my courage began to fail, my haughty spirit was somewhat humbled, and I became an object of extreme misery. Thus, I passed

several weeks in solitary confinement, until at last I contemplated how I might best put an end to my sufferings, when finally my situation was changed, and I was removed to a workshop. Here I found a few sympathizing fellow sufferers who persuaded me to attend the meetings for prayer. I followed them to the house of God, and there I found that my inner man was craving for something I did not then possess. By degrees the scales fell from my eyes, and perchance I saw that I was the greatest sinner that ever lived. My innumerable sins and transgressions arose like high mountains before me, and it seemed as if they were going to crush me. I learned to pray, and was told, that none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. Jesus, whose holy name I have so often and so shamefully misused, and whom I had so grievously offended from my youth up, was to become my helper and my solace. My heart turned against this doctrine for some time, until I found that there was no other chance, that there was no other name given under heaven, by which men might be saved. I submitted to his

constraining love; I plead his merits and mercy, and he was pleased to speak peace to my troubled soul. He transformed me from a swearing into a praying man. Glory be to God for it. J. W.

Letter from J. J.

I was in the British regular army for five and a half years; served two years in the Auxiliary legion with General Evans in Spain, where we assisted in placing the late queen on the throne, during the years 1835 and 1837. I also served three and a half years in some other parts of the world under the same flag, which I at last deserted, and came to this country. In the army I acquired a taste for liquors and other bad habits. But when I came to the city of New York, I abstained from drinking and outward bad habits, was strictly sober, and apparently upright and honest. I attended church, was religiously inclined, and was prosperous. I thought myself strong enough to resist evil, trusted in my own experience, wisdom, and strength, but

knew not the strength of Satan. About this time I became acquainted with my present wife. Her brother was a man of piety, well known, and of large influence in the Christian community. This man was continually laboring for my salvation, desired me to sign the pledge, and prayed with and for me. He was twenty-four years a member of Dr. S——'s church, and for a brief period a member of the Antioch and Bloomingdale Baptist church. I listened very attentively to my brother-in-law's entreaties, and thought they were very good; but his kind words did not reach my heart with sufficient force, and again I became habituated to drinking. Believing that rum and religion cannot go together, I dropped one, but lo, it was the wrong one. The house of God was forsaken, the Bible given up, various vices were practiced, I became as bad as ever, and was finally discharged from employment. I commenced buying stolen goods cheap for cash, from which I realized a large profit. This, however, would not last very long. The watchful eye of Providence was upon me, and the blessing of God seemed to

have forsaken me. I was arrested, plead guilty, that I might not implicate others of whom I had purchased, and to whom I had sold the stolen property. I had the strongest recommendations ever brought into a court-room to establish a good character, and the judge was astonished to see me in such a place under such circumstances, until one word explained all—drink!

On my arrival here I was very miserable; had no friends to visit me; seemed to be despised, abandoned, and lost. At length I commenced looking at myself, and found that I might better my lot by making Christ my friend. I did so. God showed me mercy; he took away my heart of stone, and gave me a heart of flesh. I became converted at this late hour—aged 50 years—and I can now pray from my soul that the Lord may advance his glorious kingdom and destroy the kingdom of darkness, and especially that liquid of hell, to which I had so long been subject, and which has kept me away from God and happiness. All things, although I am in prison, are exceedingly well with me. I

have sweet peace of mind, and feel that Jesus is mine and I am his. Prison experience has been blessed in establishing me in a new career, and with the grace of God I will enter upon a new life, ever beholding the prize before me—a glorious crown, ever thanking him for his mercy.

J. I.

"Direct
us, O Lord, in all
our doings, with thy most
gracious favor, and further us
with thy continual help; that in all our
works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we
may glorify thy holy name, and finally,
by thy mercy, obtain everlast-
ing life; through Jesus
Christ our Lord."
Amen.

242.44 Ec35

Echoe from the living grave by a Convict in Sing-Sing prison

242.44
Ec 35